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by

Kristin Anne McGarity

2009

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certifies that this is the approved version of the following dissertation:**

**In Memoriam Octavia Butler
for Chorus, Orchestra, and Speaker**

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In Memoriam Octavia Butler
for Chorus, Orchestra and Speaker

by

Kristin Anne McGarity, M.M.

Dissertation

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The University of Texas at Austin
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*Dedicated to the first Music Technology students at Montana State University,
in memory of Jeff Korba.*

Acknowledgements

Throughout the writing of this piece I have owed an incalculable debt to my husband David Charles for superhuman patience and support, and to my parents Thomas and Cathleen McGarity for making my education possible.

I would like to thank my supervisor Donald Grantham and the members of my committee for many years of advice and help, and for steering my work and my career in the right direction.

I also owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to my "work families" over all these years: Ronnie Greene and the Q.C. Commandos, and the MONSTER crew.

And of course, though she will never know this on Earth, I am grateful to Octavia E. Butler for changing my life through her work.

Wherever the future takes us, you are all in my heart.

In Memoriam Octavia Butler

for Chorus, Orchestra, and Speaker

Kristin Anne McGarity, DMA

The University of Texas at Austin, 2009

Supervisor: Dr. Donald Grantham, DMA

Octavia E. Butler (1947-2006), the first major African-American woman science fiction writer and the only science-fiction author to win the MacArthur "genius" grant, died from an accidental fall in February 2006. She is remembered for her work, which clearly fits into the science-fiction tradition, with imagined near- and far-future technologies, telepathy, aliens, space travel, and time travel. Yet Butler's stories are not clichéd space operas featuring white men in spaceship battles. Whatever the near- or far-future setting, the challenging themes that form the substance of Butler's writing are always power, dominance, slavery, and the complexity of human relationships.

Butler's best-known works include the *Parable* novels (*Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*), in which the main character Lauren Olamina writes a series of verses that become a new religion in an imagined near-future dystopian version of the United States. This dissertation is a composition for SATB chorus, orchestra, and speaker based on these verses and on quotations from Butler herself describing how she became a writer and the genesis of the *Parable* series.

The musical setting of these quotations highlights parallels between Butler's novels and her own life. In the accompanying paper I analyze my process of extrapolating selected themes from Butler's life and work. My intent is to demonstrate how these themes are interwoven into the musical setting at many levels, and to show how the particular quotations and themes I chose to set musically reveal Butler's insights about present-day human experience on a larger scale.

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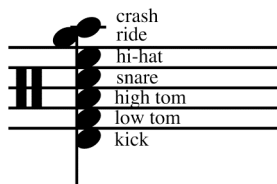
***In Memoriam Octavia Butler* - Instrumentation**

Piccolo
Flute 1 & 2
Oboe 1 & 2
Clarinet in B-flat 1 & 2
Bass Clarinet
Bassoon 1 & 2

4 Horns
3 Trumpets in B-flat, one player doubling on piccolo trumpet
3 Trombones
Tuba

3 Timpani, 1 suspended cymbal

Percussion 1:
Glockenspiel
Slap Stick
Bass Drum
Suspended cymbal
Concert snare
Drum Set:



Percussion 2:
Vibraphone
Chimes
Slap Stick
Suspended cymbal
Tam-tam
Glockenspiel (shared with Percussion 1)
Tambourine

Violin 1, *divisi* parts 1-3
Violin 2, *divisi* parts 1-3
Viola, *divisi* parts 1-2
Cello
Double Bass, one player doubling on electric bass

African-American woman speaker, low voice, amplified.
[Note: In instances where speeches overlap with music, overlapping text is notated in the score.]

Length: 29 min.
Conductor's score and parts are available from the composer
kristi@mcgaritymusic.com, <http://www.mcgaritymusic.com>

Libretto for speaker - *In Memoriam Octavia Butler*

Octavia Speech 1, m. 194:

I say to students, anything that doesn't dismember or kill you will probably come out in your writing.

My mother's life and my grandmother's life and the little bit I know of her ancestors' lives were very hard and very terrible. These were not lives that I would have wanted to live. My grandmother chopped sugar cane, and she also did the family laundry, not just her own family but the white family for whom they worked. . . . There was no school in that area for black children, and racial segregation was very rigid in those days.

Her mother died when she was born, and she was raised by people who didn't really want another mouth to feed. She met a man in his 40s who wasn't actually a monster, and, by goodness, they got married. She was 12. Yeah, it was legal. . . Louisiana. . . . Right after she had her second child, her husband died. That happened to be right around the time of the Depression, when there hadn't been much work or very much money. Now there was even less. So she went to California as a domestic, and worked and worked and worked. She eventually was able to buy a house. She bought some land out in the desert and set up a chicken ranch.

Her big dream for me was that I should get a job as a secretary and be able to sit down when I worked.

Octavia Speech 2, m. 303:

One of my earliest memories is being carried out of a burning house in the middle of- I guess you could say it was the burning desert, only it was night. . . . We had nothing like a telephone. We had no electricity. So there was no way to call the fire department. This was a house that my uncles had built with their own hands, so it was especially. . . all sorts of things were lost. But my biggest memory was being snatched up that way and awakened, and standing outside watching the house burn down.

Octavia Speech 3, m. 338:

The reason my mother did domestic work was not only that she was black, but because she was the oldest daughter. This meant that after only three years of education, she was pulled out of school and put to work.

I was occasionally taken to work with my mother and made to sit in the car all day, because I wasn't really welcome inside, of course. Sometimes, I was able to go inside and hear people talk about or to my mother in ways that were obviously disrespectful. As

a child I did not blame them for their disgusting behavior, but I blamed my mother for taking it. This is something I carried with me for quite a while, as she entered back doors, and as she went deaf at appropriate times. As I got older I realized that this is what kept me fed, and this is what kept a roof over my head.

Octavia speech 4, m. 385:

My mother just made a remark accidentally when I was about ten. She saw me writing and I told her I was writing a story, and she said "Well, maybe you'll be a writer." An in that little sentence, I mean, it was like in cartoons where the light goes on over the guy's head. . . there are such things as writers. People can be writers.

As an only child, I never really learned to be part of a group. This made me very awkward and strange around kids, and, unfortunately, children have a pecking order and it was very much in effect. If you're a little chicken, you die of it, but if you're a little kid, you only want to die of it.

Instead, I grew to be six feet tall. Boys in particular seemed to assume that I had done this growing deliberately and that I should be ridiculed for it as often as possible. I hid out in a big pink notebook-- one that would hold a whole ream of paper. I made myself a universe in it. There I could be a magic horse, a Martian, or a telepath. . . There I could be anywhere but here, any time but now, with any people but these.

Octavia speech 5, m. 446:

When I wrote *Parable of the Sower* the things that stirred me up the most were the things going on right now. The daily news. There are so many terrible things that are going on that no one is paying attention to because they aren't quite that bad yet. I talk about the return of slavery, which is real. I mean, that's not something that I pulled out of history; that's something I pulled out of the newspapers.

It was intended as a cautionary tale. "Look what we're coming to if we're not careful." And if people see it as scary, it's possible they'll have their eyes a little wider open.

Solo Tenor/Octavia Dialogue, m. 557:

(Speaking tenor soloist walks around to the front speaker position)

Tenor solo - spoken:

So do you really believe that in the future we're going to have the kind of trouble you write about in your books?

Octavia:

I didn't make up the problems. All I did was look around at the problems we're neglecting now and give them about 30 years to grow into full-fledged disasters.

Tenor:

OK, so what's the answer?

Octavia:

There isn't one.

Tenor:

No answer? You mean we're just doomed?

Octavia:

No. I mean there's no single answer that will solve all of our future problems. There's no magic bullet. Instead there are thousands of answers-- at least. You can be one of them if you choose to be.

Octavia speech 6, m. 691:

I began the story feeling little hope or liking for the human species, but by the time I reached the end of it, my hope had come back. It always seems to do that.

In Memoriam Octavia Butler

for chorus, orchestra, and speaker

Kristi McGarity

Introduction
Brightly $\text{♩} = 60$

Piccolo
1
2
Flute
1
2
Oboe
1
2
Clarinet in Bb
1
2
Bass Clarinet
1
2
Bassoon
1
2
Horn in F
1
2
3
4
Piccolo trumpet (sounds M2 lower)
Trumpet in Bb
1
2
3
Trombone
1
2
3
Tuba
Timpani
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Soprano
Alto
Tenor
Bass

Introduction
Brightly $\text{♩} = 60$

Violin I
1
2
3
Violin II
1
2
3
Viola
1
2
Cello
Double Bass/E. B.

15
19

System 1 (Measures 15-18):

- Pic. (Piccolo)
- Fl. 1 (Flute 1)
- Fl. 2 (Flute 2)
- Ob. 1 (Oboe 1)
- Ob. 2 (Oboe 2)
- B♭ Cl. 1 (B-flat Clarinet 1)
- B♭ Cl. 2 (B-flat Clarinet 2)
- B. Cl. (Bass Clarinet)
- Bsn. 1 (Bassoon 1)
- Bsn. 2 (Bassoon 2)
- Hr. 1 (Horn 1)
- Hr. 2 (Horn 2)
- Hr. 3 (Horn 3)
- Hr. 4 (Horn 4)
- B♭ Tpt. 1 (B-flat Trumpet 1)
- B♭ Tpt. 2 (B-flat Trumpet 2)
- B♭ Tpt. 3 (B-flat Trumpet 3)
- Tbn. 1 (Tenor Horn 1)
- Tbn. 2 (Tenor Horn 2)
- Tbn. 3 (Tenor Horn 3)
- Tuba
- Timp. (Timpani)
- Perc. 1 (Percussion 1)
- Perc. 2 (Percussion 2)
- S. (Soprano)
- A. (Alto)
- T. (Tenor)
- B. (Bass)

System 2 (Measures 18-19):

- Vln. I 1 (Violin I 1)
- Vln. I 2 (Violin I 2)
- Vln. I 3 (Violin I 3)
- Vln. II 1 (Violin II 1)
- Vln. II 2 (Violin II 2)
- Vln. II 3 (Violin II 3)
- Vla. 1 (Viola 1)
- Vla. 2 (Viola 2)
- Vc. (Violoncello)
- Db./E.B. (Double Bass/Double Bass)

Measure 18: Contains musical notation with dynamics *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano).

Measure 19: Contains musical notation with dynamics *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano).

29 34

Picc.

1

Fl. 2

1

Ob. 2

1

B♭ Cl. 2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn. 2

1

2

3

4

Hn.

1

B♭ Tpt. 2

3

1

Tbn. 2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

29 34

Vln. I 1

Vln. I 2

Vln. I 3

Vln. II 1

Vln. II 2

Vln. II 3

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

espressivo *f* *mf*

9

69

Picc. *f* *dim.* *p*

Fl. 1 *f* *dim.* *p*

Fl. 2 *f* *dim.* *p*

Ob. 1 *f* *dim.* *p*

Ob. 2 *f* *dim.* *p*

B♭ Cl. 1 *f* *dim.* *p*

B♭ Cl. 2 *f* *dim.* *p*

B. Cl. *f* *dim.* *p*

Bsn. 1 *f* *dim.* *p*

Bsn. 2 *f* *dim.* *p*

Hr. 1 *f* *p*

Hr. 2 *f* *p*

B♭ Tpt. 1 *f* *p* To B♭ Tpt.

B♭ Tpt. 2 *f* *p*

B♭ Tpt. 3 *f* *p*

Tbn. 1 *f* *p*

Tbn. 2 *f* *p*

Tbn. 3 *f* *p*

Tuba *f* *p*

Timp. *f*

Perc. 1 Glockenspiel *f* *p*

Perc. 2 Chimes *f* *p*

S. *f* *mp*

A. *f* *mp*

T. *f* *mp*

B. *f* *mp*

Vln. I 1 *f* *mp*

Vln. I 2 *f* *mp*

Vln. I 3 *f* *mp*

Vln. II 1 *f* *mp*

Vln. II 2 *f* *mp*

Vln. II 3 *f* *mp*

Vla. 1 *f* *mp*

Vla. 2 *f* *mp*

Vc. *f* *p*

Db./E.B. *f* *p*

76

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hr.

2

3

4

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

76

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./E.B.

The musical score for measures 76-80 is presented in a standard orchestral format. The top system (measures 76-80) includes parts for Piccolo, Flutes (1, 2), Oboes (1, 2), B♭ Clarinets (1, 2), Bass Clarinet, Bassoon (1, 2), Horns (1, 2, 3, 4), B♭ Trumpets (1, 2, 3), Trombones (1, 2, 3), Tuba, Timpani, Percussion 1 and 2, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass, Violins I and II (1, 2, 3), Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass/Double Bass. The bottom system (measures 76-80) includes parts for Violins I and II (1, 2, 3), Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass/Double Bass. The score features various dynamics (p, mp, pp) and articulation marks throughout the measures.

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

Bb Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hn.

2

3

4

1

Bb Tpt 1

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S

A

T

B

p

Dark - ness, dark - ness, brighten-ing, dark - ness, brighten-ing

p

Dark - ness, Dark - ness, brighten ing, Dark - ness bright ten ing, dark - ness,

Dark - ness, dark - ness,

1
Vln. I

2

3

1
Vln. II

2

3

1
Vla.

2

Vc.

Db/
E.B.

96 101

Picc. *f*

1 *f*

Fl. 2 *f*

1

Ob. 2

1

B♭ Cl. 2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn. 2

1

Hr. 2

3

4

B♭ Tpt. 1

2

3

Tbn. 1

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1 *p* Vibes (motor off)

Perc. 2 *mp*

S. ing. brighten ing. brighten ing. stars stars stars

A. brighten ing. brighten ing. brighten ing. brighten ing. stars stars stars

T. brighten ing. brighten ing. brighten ing. brighten ing. brighten ing. brighten ing.

B. *p* Stars stars brighten ing.

96 101

1

Vln. I 2

3

1

Vln. II 2

3

1

Vla. 2

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

14

15

133 Joyous ♩ = 120

Picc. *mf*

1 *mf*

Fl. 2 *mf*

1 *mf*

Ob. 2 *mf*

1 *mf*

B♭ Cl. 2 *mf*

B. Cl. *mf*

1 *mf*

Bsn. 2 *mf*

1 *mf*

Hr. 2 *mf*

3 *mf*

B♭ Tpt. 1 *mf*

2 *mf*

3 *mf*

Tbn. 1 *mf*

2 *mf*

3 *mf*

Tuba *mf*

Timp. *mf*

Perc. 1 *mp* bass drum

Perc. 2 *mp*

S. *mf* Dark - - - - ness gives shape to the light as light shapes dark - ness

A. *mf* Dark - - - - ness

T. *mf* Dark - - - - ness gives shape to the light as light shapes dark - ness

B. *mf*

133 Joyous ♩ = 120

Vln. I 1 *mf*

2 *mf*

3 *mf*

Vln. II 1 *mf*

2 *mf*

3 *mf*

Vla. 1 *mf*

2 *mf*

Vc. *mf*

Db./ E.B. *mf*

140

Pic.

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hr.

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

Death shapes life as life shapes death.

140

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db./E.B.

147 149

Pic. *mp*

Fl. 1 *mp*

Fl. 2 *mp*

Ob. 1 *mp*

Ob. 2 *mp*

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B. Cl. 1

B. Cl. 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hr. 1

Hr. 2

Hr. 3

Hr. 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

B♭ Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2 *p* *f* *mp* *mf* *p* *tambourine w/ snare sticks*

S. *f* Dark - ness gives shape to the

A. *f* Dark - ness gives shape to the

T. *f* Dark - ness gives shape to the

B. *f* Dark - ness gives shape to the

147 149

Vln. I 1 *f*

Vln. I 2 *f*

Vln. I 3 *f*

Vln. II 1 *f*

Vln. II 2 *f*

Vln. II 3 *f*

Vla. 1 *f*

Vla. 2 *f*

Vc. *f* With energy

Db./ E.B. *f* With energy

153

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hr. 1

Hr. 2

Hr. 3

Hr. 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

B♭ Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

153

Vln. I 1

Vln. I 2

Vln. I 3

Vln. II 1

Vln. II 2

Vln. II 3

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vc.

Db./E.B.

20

21

172

Pic. 1 2

Fl. 1 2

Ob. 1 2

B♭ Cl. 1 2

B. Cl. 1 2

Bsn. 1 2

Hr. 1 2 3 4

B♭ Tpt. 1 2 3

Tbn. 1 2 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1 concert snare

Perc. 2 tambourine w/ snare sticks

S.

A.

T.

B.

Dynamic markings: *dim.*, *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *pp*, *espressivo*, *p*.

Performance instructions: *solo*, *1°*, *1°*.

172

Vln. I 1 2 3

Vln. II 1 2 3

Vla. 1 2

Vc. 1 2

Db./E.B.

Dynamic markings: *mp*, *pp*, *f*, *p*.

Performance instruction: *espressivo*.

178

184 Bluesy $\text{♩} = 60$

Woodwinds: Piccolo, Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, Bass Clarinet 1 & 2, Bassoon 1 & 2, Horn 1, 2, & 3, Baritone/Euphonium 1, 2, & 3, Trombone 1, 2, & 3, Tuba.

Strings: Violin 1, 2, & 3, Viola 1, 2, Violoncello, Double Bass.

Percussion: Percussion 1, Percussion 2.

Vocalists: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass.

Measure 178: Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, Bass Clarinet 1 & 2, Bassoon 1 & 2, Horn 1, 2, & 3, Baritone/Euphonium 1, 2, & 3, Trombone 1, 2, & 3, Tuba, Violin 1, 2, & 3, Viola 1, 2, Violoncello, and Double Bass play a melodic line starting on G4. Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, Bass Clarinet 1 & 2, and Bassoon 1 & 2 play a rhythmic pattern. Horn 1, 2, & 3, Baritone/Euphonium 1, 2, & 3, Trombone 1, 2, & 3, and Tuba play a sustained note. Percussion 1 and 2 play a rhythmic pattern.

Measure 184: Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, Bass Clarinet 1 & 2, Bassoon 1 & 2, Horn 1, 2, & 3, Baritone/Euphonium 1, 2, & 3, Trombone 1, 2, & 3, Tuba, Violin 1, 2, & 3, Viola 1, 2, Violoncello, and Double Bass play a melodic line starting on G4. Flute 1 & 2, Oboe 1 & 2, Bass Clarinet 1 & 2, and Bassoon 1 & 2 play a rhythmic pattern. Horn 1, 2, & 3, Baritone/Euphonium 1, 2, & 3, Trombone 1, 2, & 3, and Tuba play a sustained note. Percussion 1 and 2 play a rhythmic pattern. The Double Bass has a solo section marked "solo" and "bluesy, free tempo".

186 Octavia speech #1

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

2

Hn.

3

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

186 Octavia speech #1

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./
E.B.

Octavia Speech 1:

I say to students, anything that doesn't dismember or kill you will probably come out in your writing.

My mother's life and my grandmother's life and the little bit I know of her ancestors' lives were very hard and very terrible. These were not lives that I would have wanted to live. My grandmother chopped sugar cane, and she also did the family laundry, not just her own family but the white family for whom they worked. . . . There was no school in that area for black children, and racial segregation was very rigid in those days.

Her mother died when she was born, and she was raised by people who didn't really want another mouth to feed. She met a man in his 40s who wasn't actually a monster, and, by goodness, they got married. She was 12. Yeah, it was legal. . . . Louisiana. . . . Right after she had her second child, her husband died. That happened to be right around the time of the Depression, when there hadn't been much work or very much money. Now there was even less. So she went to California as a domestic, and worked and worked and worked. She eventually was able to buy a house. She bought some land out in the desert and set up a chicken ranch.

Her big dream for me was that I should get a job as a secretary and be able to sit down when I worked.

195 Catching fire ♩ = 88

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hr.

2

3

4

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

slap stick

Perc. 1

slap stick

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

195 Catching fire ♩ = 88

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./E.B.

199

Picc.

1

Fl. 2

1

Ob. 2

1

B♭ Cl. 2

1

B. Cl. 2

1

Bsn. 2

1

Hn. 2

3

4

1

B♭ Tpt. 2

3

1

Tbn. 2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

199

1

Vln. I 2

3

1

Vln. II 2

3

1

Vla. 2

3

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

203

207

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hr.

2

3

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 203 through 207 for the woodwind and percussion sections. The instruments listed on the left are Piccolo, Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1 and 2, B♭ Clarinet 1 and 2, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon 1 and 2, Horns 1, 2, and 3, B♭ Trumpet 1, 2, and 3, Trombone 1, 2, and 3, Tuba, Timpani, Percussion 1, Percussion 2, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The score shows complex rhythmic patterns with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, often beamed together. Dynamic markings such as *mf*, *f*, *mp*, *p*, and *ff* are present. Performance instructions like 'slap stick' are noted for Percussion 1 and 2. Measure numbers 203 and 207 are indicated in boxes at the top of the first and fifth staves respectively.

203

207

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 203 through 207 for the string section. The instruments listed on the left are Violin I 1, 2, and 3; Violin II 1, 2, and 3; Viola 1 and 2; Violoncello; and Double Bass/Double Bass. The score features long, sweeping melodic lines with many slurs and ties across measures. Dynamic markings include *mf* and *f*. Measure numbers 203 and 207 are indicated in boxes at the top of the first and fifth staves respectively.

Picc.
 1
 Fl.
 2
 1
 Ob.
 2
 1
 Bb Cl.
 2
 B. Cl.
 1
 Bsn.
 2
 1
 Hn.
 2
 3
 1
 Bb Tpt.
 2
 3
 1
 Tbn.
 2
 3
 Tuba
 Timp.
 Perc. 1
 Perc. 2
 S.
 A.
 T.
 B.

This section of the score covers measures 211 through 215. The woodwind section (Piccolo, Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoon) features complex, fast-moving passages with many slurs and ties. The brass section (Trumpets, Trombones, Tuba) provides harmonic support with sustained notes and some rhythmic patterns. The percussion section includes a snare drum (Perc. 1) and a tom-tom (Perc. 2). The vocal section (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) is currently silent.

1
 Vln. I
 2
 3
 1
 Vln. II
 2
 3
 1
 Vla.
 2
 Vc.
 Db./
 E.B.

This section of the score covers measures 211 through 215. The string section (Violins I, Violins II, Viola, Violoncello) plays sustained, harmonic notes. The double bass (Db./E.B.) plays a rhythmic pattern. The woodwind and brass sections are silent in this section.

228

Pic.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hr.

2

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

228

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./E.B.

241

246 Like sunlight through clouds

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

mf cresc.

ff

1

B♭ Cl.

2

mf cresc.

ff

1

B♭ Cl.

2

ff

1

Bsn.

2

cresc.

ff

1

Hr.

2

a2

f

3

4

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

f

1

Tbn.

2

3

f

Tuba

f

Temp.

f

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

mp

We have lived be - fore, we will live a -

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B. Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hn.

2

3

4

1

B. Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

254

[illegible]

265

268

Picc. 

1 

Fl. 2 

1 

Ob. 2 

1 

B♭ Cl. 2 

B. Cl. 

1 

Bsn. 2 

1 

2 

3 

4 

1 

B♭ Tpt. 2 

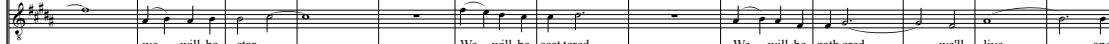
3 

1 

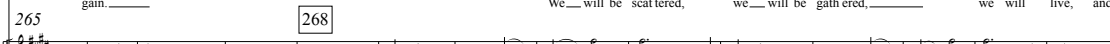
Tbn. 2 

3 

Tuba 

Timp. 

Perc. 1 

Perc. 2 

S.  we will be star

A.  mind, we_ will be star, We_ will be scat tered, We_ will be gath ered, we will be gath ered, we'll live, and

T.  we_ will be star We_ will be scat tered, We_ will be gath ered, we'll live, and

B.  gain. We_ will be scat tered, we_ will be gath ered, we will live, and

265

268

1  *mp*

2  *mp*

3  *mf*

1  *mf*

2  *mf*

3  *mf*

1  *mf*

2  *mf*

Vla.  *p* *mp*

1  *mf*

2  *p* *mp*

Vc.  *p* *mp*

Db./ 

E.B. 

278

287

Picc.
 1
 Fl.
 2
 1
 Ob.
 2
 1
 B♭ Cl.
 2
 B. Cl.
 1
 Bsn.
 2
 1
 Hn.
 2
 3
 4
 B♭ Tpt.
 1
 2
 3
 1
 Tbn.
 2
 3
 Tuba
 Timp.
 Perc. 1
 Perc. 2
 S.
 A.
 T.
 B.

gently
mp
mp
 1^o
p
 gently
p

We will live, and we will serve life.
 we will serve life.
 We will live, and we will serve life.
 we will serve life, we will live and we will serve life.
 we will serve life, we will live, and we will serve life.

278

287

Vln. I
 1
 2
 3
 Vln. II
 1
 2
 3
 Vla.
 1
 2
 Vc.
 Db./E.B.

p
mf
mf
mf
p
mf
mf
p
p
mf
p

292

Octavia speech #2

Musical score for measures 292-299. The score includes parts for Piccolo, Flute (1, 2), Oboe (1, 2), B♭ Clarinet (1, 2), B Clarinet, Bassoon (1, 2), Horn (1, 2, 3, 4), B♭ Trumpet (1, 2, 3), Trombone (1, 2, 3), Tuba, Timpani, Percussion 1, Percussion 2, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The woodwinds and brass are mostly silent, with some woodwinds playing sustained notes in the final measures. The strings are also mostly silent, with some activity in the final measures.

292

Octavia speech #2

Musical score for measures 292-299, focusing on the string section. The parts include Violin I (1, 2, 3), Violin II (1, 2, 3), Viola (1, 2), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass/Double Bass (Db./E.B.). The key signature is three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The strings play a complex, rhythmic pattern with dynamic markings of *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). The score includes many slurs and ties, indicating a continuous melodic and harmonic flow.

Octavia Speech 2:

One of my earliest memories is being carried out of a burning house in the middle of-- I guess you could say it was the burning desert, only it was night. . . . We had nothing like a telephone. We had no electricity. So there was no way to call the fire department. This was a house that my uncles had built with their own hands, so it was especially. . . all sorts of things were lost. But my biggest memory was being snatched up that way and awakened, and standing outside watching the house burn down.

304 Bluesy ♩ = 72

Pic.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hr.

2

3

4

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

mp *solo* bluesy, free tempo

An y change may bear seeds of ben e-fit. ____ Seek them out ____ seek them out. An y change may ____ bear seeds of ____ harm. ____

304 Bluesy ♩ = 72

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

319

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

Ob.

1

2

B♭ Cl.

1

2

B. Cl.

1

2

Bsn.

1

2

Hr.

1

2

3

4

B♭ Tpt.

1

2

3

Tbn.

1

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

concert snare

p *mf*

p *mf*

319

Vln. I

1

2

3

Vln. II

1

2

3

Vla.

1

2

Vc.

1

2

Db./E.B.

dim.

dim.

dim.

dim.

dim.

f

f

42

334 Octavia speech #3

This musical score block covers measures 334 to 337. It includes staves for Piccolo, Flute 1 and 2, Oboe 1 and 2, Bassoon 1 and 2, Clarinet in Bb 1 and 2, Clarinet in Bb, Bassoon, Horn 1 and 2, Trumpet in Bb 1, 2, and 3, Trombone 1, 2, and 3, Tuba, Timpani, Percussion 1 (bass drum), Percussion 2 (sus. cym.), Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The woodwinds and strings play rapid sixteenth-note passages. The brass section has more sustained notes with some dynamic markings like *ff* and *mf*. The percussion includes a bass drum pattern and a suspended cymbal. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) are mostly silent in this section.

334 Octavia speech #3

This musical score block covers measures 334 to 337, continuing from the previous block. It includes staves for Violin I (1, 2, 3), Violin II (1, 2, 3), Viola (1, 2), Cello (1, 2), and Double Bass/Double Bass. The strings play sustained notes with some dynamic markings like *f* and *ff*. The Violin I and II parts have some melodic lines. The Viola and Cello parts are mostly sustained notes. The Double Bass part has a few notes.

Octavia Speech 3:

The reason my mother did domestic work was not only that she was black, but because she was the oldest daughter. This meant that after only three years of education, she was pulled out of school and put to work.

I was occasionally taken to work with my mother and made to sit in the car all day, because I wasn't really welcome inside, of course. Sometimes, I was able to go inside and hear people talk about or to my mother in ways that were obviously disrespectful. As a child I did not blame them for their disgusting behavior, but I blamed my mother for taking it. This is something I carried with me for quite a while, as she entered back doors, and as she went deaf at appropriate times. As I got older I realized that this is what kept me fed, and this is what kept a roof over my head.

46

Picc.
 1
 Fl.
 2
 1
 Ob.
 2
 1
 B♭ Cl.
 2
 B. Cl.
 1
 Bsn.
 2
 1
 Hn.
 2
 3
 B♭ Tpt.
 1
 2
 3
 Tbn.
 1
 2
 3
 Tuba
 Timp.
 Perc. 1
 Perc. 2
 S.
 A.
 T.
 B.
 356
 1
 Vln. I
 2
 3
 1
 Vln. II
 2
 3
 1
 Vla.
 2
 Vc.
 Db./E.B.

are es - sen - tial - ly — pow er strug gles, — All — Most are no more in - tel lec - tu al than two rams
 are es - sen - tial - ly — pow er strug gles, — pow - er strug - gles. — Most are no more in - tel lec - tu al than two rams
 — All — All — All — Most are no more in - tel lec - tu al than two rams
 — All — All — All — Most are no more in - tel lec - tu al than two rams

365

367

Pic. 1 2

Fl. 1 2

Ob. 1 2

B♭ Cl. 1 2

B. Cl. 1 2

Bsn. 1 2

Hr. 1 2 3

B♭ Tpt. 1 2 3

Tbn. 1 2 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S. knock ing their heads to - geth er. All strug gles are es sential-ly pow er strug gles, pow er strug-gles.

A. knock ing their heads to - geth er. All strug gles are es sential-ly pow er strug gles, pow er strug-gles.

T. knock ing their heads to - geth er. All strug gles are es sential-ly pow er strug gles, pow er strug-gles.

B. knock ing their heads to - geth er. All strug gles are es sential-ly pow er strug gles, pow er strug-gles.

365 367

Tune G♯ to G, C♯ to C

Vln. I 1 2 3

Vln. II 1 2 3

Vla. 1 2

Vc.

Db./E.B.

365 367

Octavia speech 4:

My mother just made a remark accidentally when I was about ten. She saw me writing and I told her I was writing a story, and she said "Well, maybe you'll be a writer." An in that little sentence, I mean, it was like in cartoons where the light goes on over the guy's head. . . there are such things as writers. People can be writers.




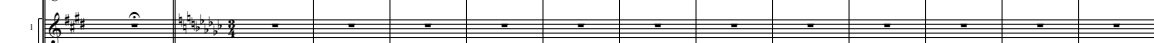





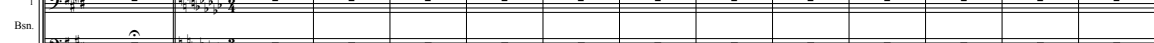

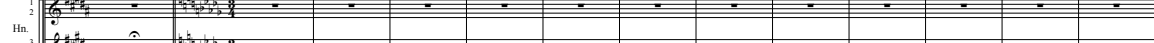
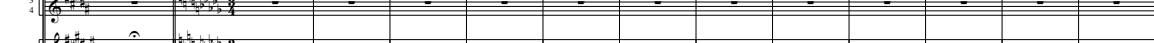
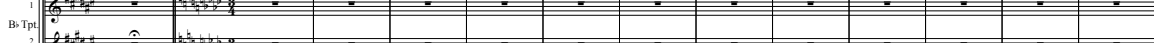












As an only child, I never really learned to be part of a group. This made me very awkward and strange around kids, and, unfortunately, children have a pecking order and it was very much in effect. If you're a little chicken, you die of it, but if you're a little kid, you only want to die of it.

Instead, I grew to be six feet tall. Boys in particular seemed to assume that I had done this growing deliberately and that I should be ridiculed for it as often as possible. I hid out in a big pink notebook-- one that would hold a whole ream of paper. I made myself a universe in it. There I could be a magic horse, a Martian, or a telepath. . .

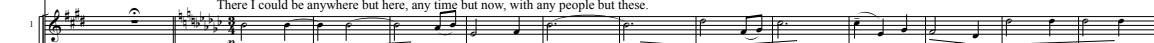
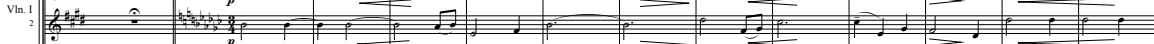










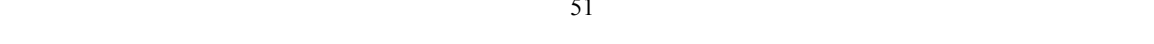
(strings enter, m. 386)

There I could be anywhere but here, any time but now, with any people but these.

Octavia speech #4 386 Delicately $\text{♩} = 76$
 There I could be a magic horse, a Martian, or a telepath.
 There I could be anywhere but here, any time but now, with any people but these.

Picc. 
 1 
 Fl. 2 
 1 
 Ob. 2 
 1 
 B♭ Cl. 2 
 B. Cl. 
 1 
 Bsn. 2 
 1 
 2 
 3 
 4 
 B♭ Tpt. 
 1 
 2 
 3 
 Tuba 
 Timp. 
 Perc. 1 
 Perc. 2 
 S. 
 A. 
 T. 
 B. 

Octavia speech #4 386 Delicately $\text{♩} = 76$
 There I could be a magic horse, a Martian, or a telepath. . .
 There I could be anywhere but here, any time but now, with any people but these.

Vln. I 
 1 
 2 
 3 
 Vln. II 
 1 
 2 
 3 
 Vla. 
 1 
 2 
 Vc. 
 Db./ E.B. 

398

404 Dreamlike, wistful

Picc. *Fl.* *Ob.* *B♭ Cl.* *B. Cl.* *Bsn.* *Hr.* *B♭ Tpt.* *Tbn.* *Tuba* *Timp.* *Perc. 1* *Perc. 2*

S. *A.* *T.* *B.*

mp *cresc.*

All that you touch you change_ all that you change_ chan - ges you. The

398

404 Dreamlike, wistful

Vln. I *Vln. II* *Vla.* *Vc.* *Db./E.B.*

mf *mp* *f* *p*

All that you touch you change_ chan - ges you,

Picc. *espressivo*

Fl. 1 *f*

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hr. 1

Hr. 2

Hr. 3

Hr. 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

B♭ Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S. *mp* on - ly las - ting truth, the on - ly las - ting truth. *f* All that you touch you change. *cresc.* all that you change *mf*

A. *mp* On - ly las - ting truth, *f* on - ly las - ting truth. *p* All that you touch you change. *mf* All that you change *mf*

T. *mp* On - ly las - ting truth, *f* on - ly las - ting truth. *p* All that you touch you change. *mf* All that you change *mf*

B. *mp* On - ly las - ting truth, *f* on - ly las - ting truth. *p* All that you touch you change. *mf* All that you change *mf*

on - ly las - ting truth, the on - ly las - ting truth is change. All that you touch you change.

Vln. I 1 *mf* *p* *non dim.*

Vln. I 2 *mf* *p* *non dim.*

Vln. I 3 *mf* *p* *non dim.*

Vln. II 1 *mf* *p* *non dim.*

Vln. II 2 *mf* *p* *non dim.*

Vln. II 3 *mf* *p* *non dim.*

Vla. 1 *mf* *sub. p* *non dim.*

Vla. 2 *mf* *sub. p* *non dim.*

Vc. *p* *non dim.*

Db./E.B. *p* *non dim.*

Pic.

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hr.

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

chan - ges you. The on - ly las - ting truth is change is the on - ly las - - - ting truth.

chan ges you. truth is change. on - ly las - ting truth.

ges you. The on - ly las - ting truth is change. on - ly las - ting truth.

cresc. *mf* chan - ges you, The on - ly las - ting truth is change. is the on - ly las - - - ting truth.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db./E.B.

pp

pp

pp

pp

pp

p

p

440

Octavia speech #5

Picc.
 1
 Fl.
 2
 1
 Ob.
 2
 1
 B♭ Cl.
 2
 B. Cl.
 1
 Bsn.
 2
 1
 Hn.
 2
 3
 4
 1
 B♭ Tpt.
 2
 3
 1
 Tbn.
 2
 3
 Tuba
 Timp.
 Perc. 1
 Perc. 2
 S.
 A.
 T.
 B.

440

Octavia speech #5

1
 Vln. I
 2
 3
 1
 Vln. II
 2
 3
 1
 Vla.
 2
 1
 Vc.
 Db./
 E.B.

Octavia speech 5:

When I wrote Parable of the Sower the things that stirred me up the most were the things going on right now. The daily news. There are so many terrible things that are going on that no one is paying attention to because they aren't quite that bad yet. I talk about the return of slavery, which is real. I mean, that's not something that I pulled out of history; that's something I pulled out of the newspapers.

It was intended as a cautionary tale. "Look what we're coming to if we're not careful." And if people see it as scary, it's possible they'll have their eyes a little wider open.

449 Tense and clashing ♩ = 63

The score for measures 449-458 is divided into two systems. The first system includes parts for Piccolo, Flutes (1 and 2), Oboes (1 and 2), B-flat Clarinets (1 and 2), B Clarinet, Bassoons (1 and 2), Horns (1 and 2), B-flat Trumpets (1, 2, and 3), Trombones (1, 2, and 3), Tuba, Timpani, Glockenspiel, Vibraphone (motor on), and Strings (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass). The second system includes Violins I (1, 2, and 3), Violins II (1, 2, and 3), Violas (1 and 2), Violoncello, and Double Bass/Contrabass. The music is in 3/4 time with a key signature of one flat. Measure 449 starts with a Piccolo entry marked *ff*. The Flutes and Oboes have melodic lines with accents and slurs. The Horns and Trumpets have rhythmic patterns. The Percussion section includes a bass drum part marked *p*. The Strings play a rhythmic accompaniment. The score concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 458.

449 Tense and clashing ♩ = 63

463 468

Pic.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hr.

2

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

463 468

Vln. I

1

2

3

Vln. II

1

2

3

Vla.

1

2

Vc.

8va

Db./E.B.

Cha-os. is God's most dan gerous face.

Cha-os. is God's most dan gerous face.

Cha os is God's most

Cha os is God's most

Picc. *ff*
 Fl. 1 *ff*
 Fl. 2
 Ob. 1
 Ob. 2 *f*
 B♭ Cl. 1 *f*
 B♭ Cl. 2 *f*
 B. Cl. 1 *f*
 B. Cl. 2 *f*
 Bsn. 1 *f*
 Bsn. 2 *f*
 Hn. 1
 Hn. 2
 Hn. 3
 Hn. 4
 B♭ Tpt. 1 *ff*
 B♭ Tpt. 2
 B♭ Tpt. 3
 Tbn. 1 *ff*
 Tbn. 2
 Tbn. 3
 Tuba
 Timp.
 Perc. 1 bass drum *p*
 Perc. 2 *f*
 S.
 A.
 T. dan__ ger ous face.
 B. dan__ ger ous face.
 473
 Vln. I 1 *f*
 Vln. I 2 *f*
 Vln. I 3 *f*
 Vln. II 1 *f*
 Vln. II 2 *mf*
 Vln. II 3 *mf*
 Vla. 1 *mf*
 Vla. 2 *mf*
 Vc. *mp*
 Db./E.B. *mp* *f*

484

Pic.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hr.

2

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

ff

Timp.

Perc. 1

p cresc.

Perc. 2

p cresc.

S

Cha os is God's most dan gerous face. A mor-phous, roil ing, 2

A

Cha os is God's most dan gerous face. A mor-phous, roil ing, 2

T

Cha os is God's most dan gerous face. roil ing, A

B

Cha os is God's most dan gerous face. roil ing, A

484

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

Vla.

1

2

Vc.

1

2

Db./ E.B.

mp

61

500

Picc.

1
Fl.

2

1
Ob.

2

1
B♭ Cl.

2

1
B. Cl.

2

1
Bsn.

2

1
Hn.

2

1
B♭ Tpt.

2

1
Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.
dan ger - ous face. Cha os is God's most dan ger - ous face. In

A.
dan ger - ous face. Cha os is God's most dan ger - ous face. In

T.
most dan ger - ous face. Cha os is God's most dan ger - ous face. In

B.
most dan ger - ous face. Cha os is God's most dan ger - ous face. In

500

1
Vln. I

2

3

1
Vln. II

2

3

1
Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./
E.B.

63

517 Fire and chaos ♩ = 168

Pic.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Bb Cl. 1

Bb Cl. 2

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Bb Tpt. 1

Bb Tpt. 2

Bb Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1
Tain-tam (large soft mallets)

Perc. 2
Tain-tam (large soft mallets)

S.

A.

T.

B.

[Spoken, non-synchronized - each singer starts and stops *ad lib.*]

[Spoken, non-synchronized - each singer starts and stops *ad lib.*]

[Spoken, non-synchronized - each singer starts and stops *ad lib.*]

[Spoken, non-synchronized - each singer starts and stops *ad lib.*]

517 Fire and chaos ♩ = 168

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db./E.B.

521

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

Bb Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hn.

2

3

Bb Tpt.

1

2

3

Tbn.

1

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

[Gradually increasing volume to a shout . .]

S

When apparent stability disintegrates, as it must,

People give in, to fear and depression, to need and greed.

A

When apparent stability disintegrates, as it must,

People give in, to fear and depression, to need and greed.

T

When apparent stability disintegrates, as it must,

People give in, to fear and depression, to need and greed.

B

When apparent stability disintegrates, as it must,

People give in, to fear and depression, to need and greed.

521

Vln. I

1

2

3

Vln. II

1

2

3

Vla.

1

2

Vc.

1

2

3

Db./ E.B.

526

529

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hr.

2

3

4

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

mp *f* *ff*

Perc. 1

concert snare

Perc. 2

tambourine

mf *ff*

S.

A.

T.

B.

They struggle, one against one, group against group.

They struggle, one against one, group against group.

They struggle, one against one, group against group.

They struggle, one against one, group against group.

526

529

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

68

535

Picc. 1 2

Fl. 1 2

Ob. 1 2

B♭ Cl. 1 2

B. Cl. 1 2

Bsn. 1 2

Hr. 1 2

B♭ Tpt. 1 2 3

Tbn. 1 2 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S. [Shouting continues to increase in volume]

A. [Shouting continues to increase in volume]

T. [Shouting continues to increase in volume]

B. [Shouting continues to increase in volume]

f *mf* *ff*

535

Vln. I 1 2 3

Vln. II 1 2 3

Vla. 1 2

Vc.

Db./E.B.

ff

540

544 Explode!

Intense cluster. . .

Picc. *sub. p* *molto cresc.*

Fl. 1 *sub. p* *molto cresc.*

Fl. 2 *sub. p* *molto cresc.*

Ob. 1 *sub. p* *molto cresc.*

Ob. 2 *sub. p* *molto cresc.*

B♭ Cl. 1 *sub. p* *molto cresc.*

B♭ Cl. 2 *sub. p* *molto cresc.*

B. Cl. *sub. p* *molto cresc.*

Bsn. 1 *sub. p* *molto cresc.*

Bsn. 2 *sub. p* *molto cresc.*

Hr. 1 *sf*

Hr. 2 *sf*

B♭ Tpt. 1 *sf*

B♭ Tpt. 2 *sf*

B♭ Tpt. 3 *sf*

Tbn. 1 *sf*

Tbn. 2 *sf*

Tuba *sf*

Timp. *f* *sf* *sub. cym.* *sf* *Drum Set* *improvise solo, extreme chaos*

Perc. 1 *f*

Perc. 2 *f*

S. [Shout! Synchronized in tempo] *Un til one of them becomes a leader most follow, or a tyrant most fear.*

A. [Shout! Synchronized in tempo] *Un til one of them becomes a leader most follow, or a tyrant most fear.*

T. [Shout! Synchronized in tempo] *Un til one of them becomes a leader most follow, or a tyrant most fear.* [Speaking solo tenor walks downstage to Octavia's position.]

B. [Shout! Synchronized in tempo] *Un til one of them becomes a leader most follow, or a tyrant most fear.*

540

544 Explode!

Intense cluster. . .

Vln. I 1 *sf*

Vln. I 2 *sf*

Vln. I 3 *sf*

Vln. II 1 *sf*

Vln. II 2 *sf*

Vln. II 3 *sf*

Vla. 1 *sf*

Vla. 2 *sf*

Vc. *sf*

Db./E.B. *sf*

548 rit.

Picc. solo

Fl. 1 mp

Fl. 2

Ob. 1 solo

Ob. 2 p

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B. Cl. *molto cresc.*

Bsn. 1 *molto cresc.*

Bsn. 2

Hr. 1

Hr. 2

Hr. 3

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

B♭ Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp. *sus. cym.*

Perc. 1 *p*

Perc. 2 *Tam-tam*

S.

A.

T.

B.

548 rit.

Vln. I 1

Vln. I 2

Vln. I 3

Vln. II 1

Vln. II 2

Vln. II 3

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vc. 1

Vc. 2

Db./E.B.

558 Hopeful ♩ = 60 Solo tenor/Octavia dialog

solo
pp

Picc.
1
2
Fl.
1
2
Ob.
1
2
B♭ Cl.
1
2
B. Cl.
1
2
Bsn.
1
2
Hr.
1
2
3
4
B♭ Tpt.
1
2
3
Tbn.
1
2
3
Tuba
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
S.
A.
T.
B.

Tenor solo - spoken:
So do you really believe that in the future we're going to have the kind of trouble you write about in your books?

Octavia: I didn't make up the problems. All I did was look around at the problems we're neglecting now and give them about 30 years to grow into full-fledged disasters.

Tenor: OK, so what's the answer?

558 Hopeful ♩ = 60 Solo tenor/Octavia dialog

Vln. I
1
2
3
Vln. II
1
2
3
Vla.
1
2
Vc.
Db./E.B.

pppp

568

Pic.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Bs. Cl. 1

Bs. Cl. 2

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hn. 1

Hn. 2

Hn. 3

Hn. 4

Bb Tpt. 1

Bb Tpt. 2

Bb Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

Tenor:

Octavia:

T.

B.

Octavia: There isn't one. Tenor: No answer? You mean we're just doomed? Octavia: No. I mean there's no single answer that will solve all of our future problems. There's no magic bullet. Instead there are thousands of answers-- at least. You can be one of them if you choose to be.

568

Vln. I 1

Vln. I 2

Vln. I 3

Vln. II 1

Vln. II 2

Vln. II 3

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vc.

Db./E.B.

Solo Tenor/Octavia Dialog:

Tenor solo - spoken:

So do you really believe that in the future we're going to have the kind of trouble you write about in your books?

Octavia:

I didn't make up the problems. All I did was look around at the problems we're neglecting now and give them about 30 years to grow into full-fledged disasters.

Tenor:

OK, so what's the answer?

Octavia:

There isn't one.

Tenor:

No answer? You mean we're just doomed?

Octavia:

No. I mean there's no single answer that will solve all of our future problems. There's no magic bullet. Instead there are thousands of answers-- at least. You can be one of them if you choose to be.

577 ♩ = 60

Pic.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hr.

2

3

4

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

solo *mp* bluesy, free tempo In the

A.

Meanwhile, Kindness ea____ses change. Love qui ets fear. And a sweet and pow er ful pos i tive obses sion blunts pain, di vers rage, ____ and en-ga-ges each ____ of us

T.

B.

577 ♩ = 60

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

588
597
Dreamlike, wistful $\text{♩} = 60$

Instrumentation: Picc., Fl. 1, 2, Ob. 1, 2, B♭ Cl. 1, 2, B. Cl., Bsn. 1, 2, Hn. 1, 2, 3, 4, B♭ Tpt. 1, 2, 3, Tbn. 1, 2, 3, Tuba, Timp., Perc. 1, Perc. 2, S., A., T., B., Vln. I 1, 2, 3, Vln. II 1, 2, 3, Vla. 1, 2, Vc., Db./E.B.

Vocal Lyrics:

S: great-est and the most in- tense of our chosen strug-gles. We have lived be-fore,

A: in the greatest and most in- tense of our chosen strug-gles. Kindness ca- ses change. Love quiets fear.

T:

B:

Orchestral Details: The score shows rests for most instruments. The tuba part at the bottom right includes a *p* (piano) dynamic marking.

599

E.B.

611

615

Pic.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

2

Hr.

3

4

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

we will be stone, we will be star. *mf* We will be scattered, we will be gathered, we will be gathered, we'll

mind, we will be star. We will be scattered, *mf* We will be gathered, we'll live,

we will be mind. We will be scattered, we will be gathered, we will

will be mind, we will be star.

611

615

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

mp *p* *mf*

624

637

638

Trip-hop groove, with relaxed precision

Picc.

1

Fl. 2

1

Ob. 2

1

B♭ Cl. 2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn. 2

1

Hn. 2

3

4

1

B♭ Tpt. 2

3

1

Tbn. 2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

638

Trip-hop groove, with relaxed precision

1

Vln. I 2

3

1

Vln. II 2

3

1

Vla. 2

3

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

ff

One player on electric bass
others jazz pizz.

Picc.

1

Fl. 2

1

Ob. 2

1

B♭ Cl. 2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn. 2

1

Hn. 2

3

1

B♭ Tpt. 2

3

1

Tbn. 2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

662

Vln. I 2

3

1

Vln. II 2

3

1

Vla. 2

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

675 681 Brightly $\text{♩} = 60$

Picc. f

1 f

Fl. 2 f

1 f

Ob. 2

1

B♭ Cl. 2

B. Cl. 1

Bsn. 2

1

Hr. 2

3

4

B♭ Tpt. 1

2

3

Tbn. 1

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2 f Glockenspiel

S.

A.

T.

B.

675 681 Brightly $\text{♩} = 60$

Vln. I mf p

Vln. II mf p

Vla. mp p

Vc. mp p

Db./E.B. mp $arco$ p

E.B. player switch to double bass

689 697

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hr.

2

3

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 689 to 697 for the woodwind and percussion sections. The instruments listed on the left are Piccolo, Flute (1 and 2), Oboe (1 and 2), B♭ Clarinet (1 and 2), Bass Clarinet, Bassoon (1 and 2), Horn (1, 2, 3), B♭ Trumpet (1, 2, 3), Trombone (1, 2, 3), Tuba, Timpani, Percussion 1, and Percussion 2. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *f* (forte). There are also first and second endings marked with '1°' and '2°'.

689 697

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

Detailed description: This block contains the musical notation for measures 689 to 697 for the string section. The instruments listed on the left are Violin I (1, 2, 3), Violin II (1, 2, 3), Viola (1, 2), Violoncello (Vc.), and Double Bass/Double Bass (Db./ E.B.). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *f* (forte) and *mf* (mezzo-forte). There are also first and second endings marked with '1°' and '2°'.

703

710 Octavia speech #6
I began the story feeling little hope or liking for the human species, but by the time I reached the end of it, my hope had come back. It always seems to do that.

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

1

Bsn.

2

1

Hr.

2

3

4

1

B♭ Tpt.

2

3

1

Tbn.

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

703

710 Octavia speech #6
I began the story feeling little hope or liking for the human species, but by the time I reached the end of it, my hope had come back. It always seems to do that.

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

sub. p

sub. p

sub. p

f

p

p

p

sub. p

mp

718 719 729

Picc.

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

Bsn.

Hr.

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

Tuba.

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

Drum Set

mp

solo mf

p

tutti

To sur vive, _____

Know the past. Let it touch you. Then let the past go. Go. Go.

718 719 729

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db./ E.B.

733
Trip-hop groove, with relaxed precision $\text{♩} = 60$ 744

Pic.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hr. 1

Hr. 2

Hr. 3

Hr. 4

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

B♭ Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

733
Trip-hop groove, with relaxed precision $\text{♩} = 60$ 744

Vln. I 1

Vln. I 2

Vln. I 3

Vln. II 1

Vln. II 2

Vln. II 3

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vc.

Db./E.B.

745

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

B. Cl.

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Hr. 1

Hr. 2

Hr. 3

B♭ Tpt. 1

B♭ Tpt. 2

B♭ Tpt. 3

Tbn. 1

Tbn. 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

S.

A.

T.

B.

745

Vln. I 1

Vln. I 2

Vln. I 3

Vln. II 1

Vln. II 2

Vln. II 3

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vc.

Db./E.B.

757 760

Picc. *ff*

Fl. 1 *ff*

Fl. 2 *ff*

Ob. 1 *ff*

Ob. 2 *ff*

B♭ Cl. 1 *ff*

B♭ Cl. 2 *ff*

B. Cl. *ff*

Bsn. 1 *ff*

Bsn. 2 *ff*

Hr. 1 *f*

Hr. 2 *f*

B♭ Tpt. 1 *f*

B♭ Tpt. 2 *f*

B♭ Tpt. 3 *f*

Tbn. 1 *ff*

Tbn. 2 *ff*

Tbn. 3 *ff*

Tuba *ff*

Timp. *f*

Perc. 1 *f*

Perc. 2 *f*

S. Go. Then let the past go. Then let the past go.

A. let the past go. Then let the past go. Then let the past go.

T. Go. Then let the past go. Then let the past go.

B. the past go. Then let the past go. Then let the past go.

757 760

Vln. I 1 *mf*

Vln. I 2 *mf*

Vln. I 3 *mf*

Vln. II 1 *ff*

Vln. II 2 *ff*

Vln. II 3 *ff*

Vla. 1 *ff*

Vla. 2 *ff*

Vc. *ff*

Db./E.B. *ff*

768

Picc.

1

Fl.

2

1

Ob.

2

1

B♭ Cl.

2

B. Cl.

Bsn.

1

2

Hr.

1

2

3

B♭ Tpt.

1

2

3

Tbn.

1

2

3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Tam-tam (large soft mallets)

p *f*

S.

Go.

A.

Go.

T.

Then let the past go.

B.

Go.

768

1

Vln. I

2

3

1

Vln. II

2

3

1

Vla.

2

Vc.

Db./E.B.

Full text libretto - *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* - Kristi McGarity

Part 1

Choir:

Darkness.

Darkness brightening.

Stars.

Stars casting their cool, pale, glinting light.

Darkness

gives shape to the light

As light

shapes darkness.

Death

gives shape to life

As life

shapes death.

Octavia Speech 1:

I say to students, anything that doesn't dismember or kill you will probably come out in your writing.

My mother's life and my grandmother's life and the little bit I know of her ancestors' lives were very hard and very terrible. These were not lives that I would have wanted to live. My grandmother chopped sugar cane, and she also did the family laundry, not just her own family but the white family for whom they worked. . . . There was no school in that area for black children, and racial segregation was very rigid in those days.¹

Her mother died when she was born, and she was raised by people who didn't really want another mouth to feed. She met a man in his 40s who wasn't actually a monster, and, by goodness, they got married. She was 12. Yeah, it was legal. . . Louisiana. . . . Right after she had her second child, her husband died. That happened to be right around the time of the Depression, when there hadn't been much work or very much money. Now there was even less. So she went to California as a domestic, and worked and worked and worked. She eventually was able to buy a house. She bought some land out in the desert and set up a chicken ranch.²

Her big dream for me was that I should get a job as a secretary and be able to sit down when I worked.³

Choir:
We have lived before.
We will live again.
We will be silk,
Stone,
Mind,
Star,
We will be scattered,
Gathered. . .
We will live,
And we will serve life.

Octavia Speech 2:

One of my earliest memories is being carried out of a burning house in the middle of-- I guess you could say it was the burning desert, only it was night. . . . We had nothing like a telephone. We had no electricity. So there was no way to call the fire department. This was a house that my uncles had built with their own hands, so it was especially. . . all sorts of things were lost. But my biggest memory was being snatched up that way and awakened, and standing outside watching the house burn down.⁴

Alto solo:
Any change may bear seeds of benefit.
Seek them out.
Any change may bear seeds of harm.
Beware.

Part 2

Octavia Speech 3:

The reason my mother did domestic work was not only that she was black, but because she was the oldest daughter. This meant that after only three years of education, she was pulled out of school and put to work.

I was occasionally taken to work with my mother and made to sit in the car all day, because I wasn't really welcome inside, of course. Sometimes, I was able to go inside and hear people talk about or to my mother in ways that were obviously disrespectful. As a child I did not blame them for their disgusting behavior, but I blamed my mother for taking it. This is something I carried with me for quite a while, as she entered back doors, and as she went deaf at appropriate times. As I got older I realized that this is what kept me fed, and this is what kept a roof over my head.⁵

Choir:
All struggles
are essentially
power struggles.
Who will rule,
Who will lead,
Who will define,
refine,
confine,
design.
Who will dominate.
All struggles
are essentially
power struggles.
And most
are no more intellectual
Than two rams
Knocking their heads together.

Octavia speech 4:

My mother just made a remark accidentally when I was about ten. She saw me writing and I told her I was writing a story, and she said "Well, maybe you'll be a writer." An in that little sentence, I mean, it was like in cartoons where the light goes on over the guy's head. . . there are such things as writers. People can be writers.⁶

As an only child, I never really learned to be part of a group. This made me very awkward and strange around kids, and, unfortunately, children have a pecking order and it was very much in effect. If you're a little chicken, you die of it, but if you're a little kid, you only want to die of it.⁷

Instead, I grew to be six feet tall. Boys in particular seemed to assume that I had done this growing deliberately and that I should be ridiculed for it as often as possible. I hid out in a big pink notebook-- one that would hold a whole ream of paper. I made myself a universe in it. There I could be a magic horse, a Martian, or a telepath. . . There I could be anywhere but here, any time but now, with any people but these.⁸

Choir:
All that you touch
you change.

All that you change
Changes you.

The only lasting truth
is Change.

Octavia speech 5:

When I wrote *Parable of the Sower* the things that stirred me up the most were the things going on right now. The daily news. There are so many terrible things that are going on that no one is paying attention to because they aren't quite that bad yet. I talk about the return of slavery, which is real. I mean, that's not something that I pulled out of history; that's something I pulled out of the newspapers.

It was intended as a cautionary tale. "Look what we're coming to if we're not careful." And if people see it as scary, it's possible they'll have their eyes a little wider open.⁹

Choir:
Chaos
Is God's most dangerous face--
Amorphous, roiling, hungry.

In order to rise
From its own ashes
A phoenix
First
Must
Burn.

Choir - spoken:
When apparent stability disintegrates,
As it must,
People give in
To fear and depression,
To need and greed.

. . . .
They struggle,
One against one,
Group against group,

For survival, position, power.

. . . .

until one of them becomes

A leader

Most will follow,

Or a tyrant,

Most fear.

Part 3

Solo Tenor/Octavia Dialogue:

(Speaking tenor soloist walks around to the front speaker position)

Tenor solo - spoken:

So do you really believe that in the future we're going to have the kind of trouble you write about in your books?

Octavia:

I didn't make up the problems. All I did was look around at the problems we're neglecting now and give them about 30 years to grow into full-fledged disasters.

Tenor:

OK, so what's the answer?

Octavia:

There isn't one.

Tenor:

No answer? You mean we're just doomed?

Octavia:

No. I mean there's no single answer that will solve all of our future problems. There's no magic bullet. Instead there are thousands of answers-- at least. You can be one of them if you choose to be.¹⁰

Alto solo:

Meanwhile. . .

Kindness eases Change.

Love quiets fear.

And a sweet and powerful

Positive obsession

Blunts pain,

Diverts rage,
And engages each of us
In the greatest,
The most intense,
Of our chosen struggles.

Choir:
We have lived before.
We will live again.
We will be silk,
Stone,
Mind,
Star,
We will be scattered,
Gathered. . .
We will live,
And we will serve life.

Octavia speech 6:

I began the story feeling little hope or liking for the human species, but by the time I reached the end of it, my hope had come back. It always seems to do that.¹¹

Choir:
To survive. . .
Know the past.
Let it touch you.
Then let
The past
Go.

¹ Interview with Charles Rowell, 1/31/97, *Callaloo* 20.1 (1997, journal on-line), 47-66, available from

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/callaloo/v020/20.1butler.html>; accessed 4/8/09.

² Interview with Real Change, Street News Service, 11/14/05, available from http://www.streetnewsservice.org/index.php?page=archive_detail&articleID=493, accessed 4/8/09.

³ Rowell interview, 1/31/97

⁴ Interview with William Jelani Cobb, *The Devil and Dave Chappelle and Other Essays*, New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2007, p. 143.

⁵ Rowell interview, 1/31/97

⁶ Cobb, p. 137.

⁷ Rowell interview, 1/31/97.

⁸ Octavia E. Butler, "Positive Obsession," *Bloodchild and Other Stories*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005, p. 128.

⁹ Cobb, p. 140-143.

¹⁰ Octavia E. Butler, "A Few Rules for Predicting the Future," *Essence* 31, no. 1 (May 2000), 165-66.

¹¹ Octavia E. Butler, afterword to "Speech Sounds," *Bloodchild and Other Stories*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005, p. 109.

Analysis - *In Memoriam Octavia Butler*

I. Background on Octavia Butler and her writing

Octavia E. Butler (1947-2006) is best known as the "first black woman to come to international prominence as a science fiction writer,"¹ the only science-fiction author to win the MacArthur "genius" grant, and winner of the Hugo and Nebula awards, the Langston Hughes Medal and a PEN Lifetime Achievement award. Her work clearly fits into the science-fiction tradition, with imagined near- and far-future technologies, telepathy, aliens, space travel, and time travel. Yet Butler's stories are not clichéd space operas featuring white men in spaceship battles.

Her best-known work is *Kindred*, the story of a contemporary African-American woman forced to travel back in time to the days of American slavery to save the life of her white ancestor; during these involuntary trips she gains a firsthand understanding of the conditions of slavery and the complex relationships that could develop under such conditions. Another of her best-known works is the *Xenogenesis* trilogy (published most recently as the omnibus volume *Lilith's Brood*), postulating an alien society that takes over a post-nuclear Earth to rescue and interbreed with the surviving humans. The alien Oankali can manipulate and heal living flesh and genetic code the way humans manipulate machines. They see in human genes a fatal contradiction: While we are

¹ Felicia Pride, "Eight Reasons Why Octavia Butler is Important," *Black Voices* (March 1, 2007, journal online): available from <http://www.blackvoices.com/blogs/2007/03/01/8-reasons-why-octavia-butler-is-important/#cont>; accessed 1/3/09.

extremely intelligent, we also have internalized hierarchical behavior from earlier in our evolutionary process, so (as the Oankali see us) we succeed only in thinking of more and more ways to dominate and kill each other and our environment. The Oankali are irresistably attracted to the regenerative capabilities of human cancer cells, which they describe as beautiful. Their plan is to mix their own genetic material with that of the humans. They plan to breed out the human contradiction while incorporating a controlled form of cancer capable of self-regeneration, resulting in near-immortal "construct" children who carry the best traits of both species.

The human reactions to the aliens fill a whole spectrum: some resist violently, some run away to human-only colonies, some grow irreversibly addicted to the mind-altering neural stimulation the aliens provide while healing their bodies, and some (such as the main character Lilith herself) maintain an uneasy balance between the two sides, branded as a traitor by the resister humans but never fully integrated into the Oankali-construct society either.

Stories of power, dominance, slavery, and the complicated relationships growing out of such situations - this is the substance of Butler's writing. These are discomforting, challenging themes that return again and again in her work.

Her worlds are populated by men and women of all races and origins, responding and working together the way humans really respond to dystopian, complicated, impossibly

stressful situations, situations that humans couldn't possibly survive, but must survive anyway, because what choice do they have? Her main characters are usually women, and the one thing all these women have in common is they build communities, gather groups of people (and/or aliens) together. They form unusual bonds - tri-sexuality, telepathic networks, human-alien pairings, polyamory, master-slave affairs, new religions - that seem weird and wrong in the world we know, but in the context of these impossible dystopian worlds turn out to be a means of survival, perhaps even a small corner of beauty.

She does this very deliberately, often describing her writing as a way of dealing with her own fears and prejudices - to see, for example, if she can make a brother-sister or a human-alien love story seem not just OK, but necessary and true and right, given the right context.² Which is, of course, the point. She doesn't really believe space aliens are going to colonize the earth. Underneath the surface narrative she is really writing about people, and how we can be so close and simultaneously so alien to each other. She is really writing about race and gender and sexuality and personality, and her work lights a path for us humans to figure out how to live together in a far-from-perfect world.

Born to a shoe-shine man who died in her early childhood and a house-cleaner who often took her along to work, Butler grew up dyslexic, cripplingly shy, and suffering from giantism. Her mother (also named Octavia), determined to give her daughter the

² Octavia E. Butler, afterwords to "Bloodchild" and "Near of Kin," in *Bloodchild and other Stories* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1996), 30-31, 85.

education she never had, brought used books home from the houses she cleaned. Young Octavia Estelle hid from her physical and social troubles in books and in her own notebooks, where she began to write science fiction at the age of 12.³

After attending college in California, Butler worked odd jobs for several years, waking up at two or three every morning to write. Well-known science-fiction writer Harlan Ellison helped the 23-year-old Butler attend the Clarion Writer's Workshop (for which a scholarship has now been established in her memory). This was her first big break, and shortly thereafter she sold her first novel *Patternmaster*, actually the last novel chronologically in the Patternist series, about a network of telepaths fighting for survival against a gene-mutating disease borne back to Earth from a distant planet.⁴

Well aware that she was the only female African-American science fiction author in her generation, Butler couldn't let that isolation bother her because she simply couldn't stop writing - a phenomenon she refers to as "positive obsession."⁵ She was always a solitary person, a self-described "outsider," and always lived alone. Published news reports disagree on whether she was homosexual or heterosexual, but I could not locate an instance where she spoke publicly about close relationships one way or the other. Her work was her life.

³ Octavia E. Butler, "Positive Obsession," *Bloodchild and Other Stories*. New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005, p. 128.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 126-134.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 129.

When I first thought of writing a piece based on Octavia Butler's work, the most obvious choice for a text to set musically was the poetry in her near-future urban dystopian novels, *Parable of the Sower* (1995) and *Parable of the Talents* (1998).

The *Parable* series tells the story of a global-warming worst-case scenario, and an African-American woman named Lauren Olamina who grows up in an America driven into chaos by dwindling resources and non-functional government, much like the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina but nationwide and long-term. In the midst of this "every man for himself" scenario (similar in some ways to that of Cormac McCarthy's prizewinning work *The Road*), Olamina sets off toward Canada chasing rumors of good paying work. She is tall and stocky enough to dress as a man for protection on the road. She is also both gifted and handicapped by "hyperempathy syndrome," an inherited disease caused by her mother's drug use, which causes her to feel others' pain and pleasure as if it were her own.

Along this journey Olamina gathers a small group of allies around her, whom she introduces to her own religious philosophy called Earthseed. Earthseed, in the beginning, exists only as a set of simple verses, expressing what Olamina has found to be a "network of truths."⁶ "Whether you're a human being, an insect, a microbe, or a stone, this verse is

⁶ Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Talents* (New York: Warner Books edition, 1998), 49-50.

true: All that you touch you change. All that you change changes you. The only lasting truth is change."⁷

By the end of the first *Parable* book, Earthseed has become the unifying force behind a growing community of believers, living together semi-communally on a plot of land in northern California, owned by Olamina and her much older husband, whom she met along the journey. The second *Parable* book, *Parable of the Talents*, recounts the destruction of the community by a violent contingent of religious extremists, secretly backed by a powerful extremist in the White House, who kidnap the Earthseed members' children, convert the property into a religious "re-education" camp, and force Olamina and her fellow followers into hellish slave labor as punishment for their "pagan" ways.

At this point in the novel, it seems doubtful that any of the Earthseed community will survive, let alone achieve the eventual destiny Olamina has set for them: to launch a manned mission into space. Her theory is that humanity needs to expand to other planets to ensure survival as a species once Earth's resources are depleted, a task "so long, thankless, expensive and difficult that I suspect that only a religion could do it."⁸ In the end they do overcome their captors in a bloody revolt. The original group splits up and spreads the Earthseed verses, bit by bit and person by person, across the country. By the end of Olamina's life, religious tolerance begins to return to the nation, and the now nationally-known Earthseed religion finally does achieve its destiny.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 79.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 394.

Parable of the Talents, however, is not a standard heroic tale of adversity overcome. The story is partly told from the point of view of Olamina's estranged daughter, thus revealing more about Olamina's character from the perspective of someone who doesn't like her very much. This is one aspect of the genius of Octavia Butler's writing: viewing every character and every relationship from multiple angles, delving into all the complexities of human relationships.

Butler's profile in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology "media in transition" project provides this insight:

Her writings are deeply political, and yet we would do an injustice to the complexity of her images if we reduced them to simple metaphors, and we would distort the profound ambivalence of her stories if we were to read them in any direct and uncomplicated fashion as allegories. The relationships she describes are compelling, contradictory, not easy to fit within prescribed categories. . . . Butler recognizes the complex feelings which emerge within all human relations, even those founded upon fundamental inequalities.⁹

Her explorations of human relationships go even deeper than this; she seeks to find the *reasons* for fundamental inequalities, and for the ways humans treat each other. From studying race relations and gender politics, even reading internet forums for the sixteen different Myers-Briggs personality types, I find it not implausible that we are all aliens to each other, just to differing degrees.

⁹ Henry Jenkins, "Octavia Estelle Butler," *Media in Transition Project* (July 29, 1998, journal online): available from http://web.mit.edu/m-i-t/science_fiction/profiles/butler_index.html; accessed 1/6/09.

Power relations, dominance and hierarchy, cruelty and oppression, these are the darker threads running through both Octavia Butler's work and her life. Whatever the futuristic setting, whatever the science involved, these are the themes she returns to. Butler's theory, revealed time after time in her fiction and made explicit in her essays, is that the dark side of human nature, at its root, results from our all-too-human unwillingness (or inability) to accept difference.

The "other" is threatening; in that more primitive, hierarchical part of our brains, we see "they're different" and think "we're better." Consciously or subconsciously, perhaps we *want* others to be fundamentally different from us, so we can feel less remorse about having more comfortable lives than they do, or even about our own outright cruelty.

Butler didn't merely empathize with the alienated, dominated, and oppressed. She inverted readers' expectations, forcing them to examine their own assumptions and instincts, to perceive how they might identify with and even become the alienator, dominator, and oppressor. . . . to see casual unkindness and more extreme inhumanities as different in scale but not in nature.¹⁰

We have no way to know how Butler internally came to terms with her own differences: race, gender, socioeconomic status, disability, size, religion, sexuality, introversion, even her interest in science fiction as an African-American woman. But in her fiction we see this concept of "difference" played out with characters who seem as real and complex as people we know: cultural differences, miscommunications, failures of understanding, but

¹⁰ Amy Sturgis, "The Parables of Octavia Butler," *Reason* 38, no. 2 (June 2006): 72.

also kindness, mental and physical connection, the recognition of a part of oneself in another - all the darkness and all the vulnerability of human nature.

So how do we learn to accept, to live with the alien, the "other?" And if we do try to learn, by choice or by necessity, how does that process change us? Do we, like Butler's human characters in *Xenogenesis*, find a way to survive within a paradigm of inequality, become more like the alien, even become part alien ourselves? Butler's work is science fiction, but the sciences are biology and chemistry.¹¹ Regarding hyperempathy syndrome, gender, race, cancer, genetic disease, neural stimulation, human/alien hybrids, Butler's work asks: how much of who we are is hard-wired in our genes, and how much do we have the ability to change?

In Butler's fiction, as in reality, the universe is a cruel place, impossible to survive. But by finding connections, crossing the barriers of difference - even strange connections that seem weird or wrong - we find tiny moments of saving grace, we change ourselves. Butler imagines future societies that are drastically changed, for worse or for better, but she also shows us that "[c]hange must first occur within the individuals in order to modify society in any lasting manner."¹² Just as casual unkindness and more extreme inhumanity are shown to be made of the same substance, so are these moments of grace and the healing of the human species.

¹¹ Octavia E. Butler, afterword to "The Evening and the Morning and the Night," in *Bloodchild and other Stories* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1996), 69.

¹² Clara Escoda Agusti, "The relationship between community and subjectivity in Octavia E. Butler's Parable of the Sower," *Extrapolation* 46:3 (September 22, 2005), 351.

II. The *Parable* novels and choral text setting

The Earthseed verses immediately struck me as ideal choral music, from the first time I read them in *Parable of the Sower*. In exceedingly simple, clear language, they begin by representing the central idea behind Earthseed itself, which is that nothing on Earth lasts forever. The only force that never stops is change itself: "All that you touch you change. All that you change changes you. The only lasting truth is Change."¹³

The powerful dark side of human nature is always there in the verses: "All struggles are essentially power struggles. Who will rule. Who will lead. Who will define, refine, confine, design. Who will dominate."¹⁴ "When apparent stability disintegrates, as it must, people give in to fear and depression, to need and greed. . . They struggle, one against one, group against group, for survival, position, power."¹⁵ But tiny moments of saving grace are there as well: "Kindness eases change. Love quiets fear."¹⁶ As will be discussed further in "Compositional Structure" below, the musical setting of the text reflects the emotional and metaphorical content of the words.

The remainder of the text in *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* is a part for a speaker playing the part of Octavia Butler, with speeches drawn from interviews and autobiographical essays. The score calls for an African-American female narrator with a particularly

¹³ Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Sower* (New York: Grand Central Publishing, 1993/2000), 25.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 94.

¹⁶ Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Talents* (New York: Warner Books Edition, 1998), 49.

resonant voice, to represent Octavia Butler's own famously and unusually low voice. By interspersing choral settings of the Earthseed verses with these speeches, I was able to draw parallels between the fundamental philosophy expressed in the verses and experiences in Octavia Butler's life. The intent is not to psychoanalyze or attempt guesses at exactly why Butler wrote the words she did, but rather to present a full portrait of the totality that was her life and work. To draw these parallels seems very much in keeping with her spirit, as she said on many occasions that her writing was a way of dealing with her own life.

For an audience unfamiliar with the *Parable* series, the speeches from Butler's life provide context into what the sung verses are all about. An audience that has read the *Parable* books may perceive in the spoken words a richer interplay between Butler's real life and Lauren Olamina's fictional one.

III. Elemental Motive and Four Major Themes

One short elemental motive and four central themes produce the musical structures of *In Memoriam Octavia Butler*. The elemental motive is the sixteenth-dotted-eighth rhythm, moving melodically upward by step and tied to a longer note. This motive, first introduced in the strings, appears in nearly every section of the piece in some form:



FIG 3.1 - ELEMENTAL MOTIVE, m. 9, Violin I

This motive represents the idea of "rising" which is further explored in the "Star" theme, along with the idea of a phoenix "rising from the ashes," which is referenced in the "Chaos is God's most dangerous face" verse, the climactic point of the piece. The elemental motive is also fragmented, by shortening the second note, in sections with faster 16th notes, including that same climactic buildup leading to the final section, based on "Chaos is God's most dangerous face":

FIG. 3.2 - FRAGMENTED VERSION OF ELEMENTAL MOTIVE, m. 544, woodwinds and brass

The elemental motive is extended, with longer rhythmic values and continuing the upward stepwise motion, in the first of the larger themes. I call this the "Star" theme, to signify the connection between upward motion and the Earthseed space-travel destiny, and because the word "Star" appears in the corresponding verse at the height of the melody:

FIG. 3.3 - FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE "STAR" THEME, m. 1, Piccolo.

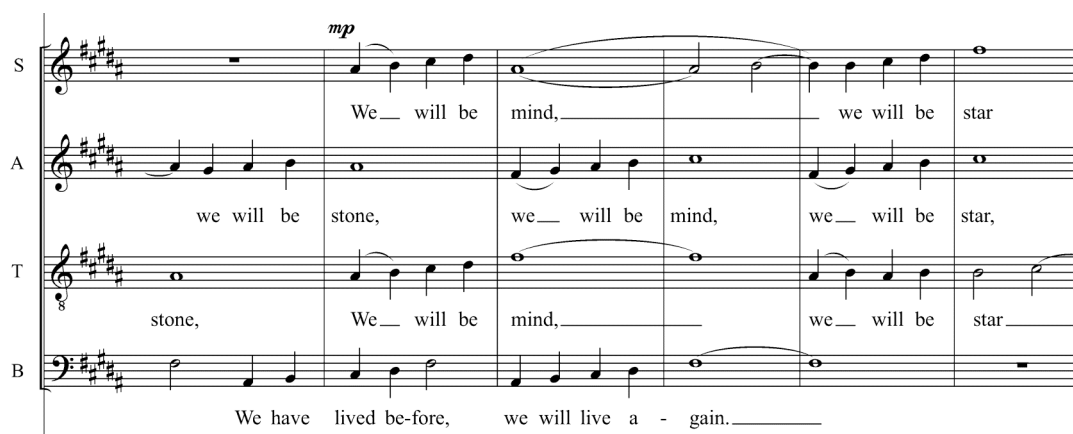


FIG. 3.4 - EXCERPT FROM CHORAL VERSION OF "STAR" THEME, m. 262, Choir

The "Wood" theme, which begins with the elemental motive, is first introduced in the strings. The "Wood" theme contains rising melodic motion as well, but in a more complex arrangement. This theme first appears in the choir part with the words "stars casting their cool, pale, glinting light." The "Wood" theme is set with text referencing stars, thus already beginning to foreshadow later juxtaposition and combination of these two themes.



FIG. 3.5 - FIRST APPEARANCE OF THE "WOOD" THEME, m. 19, Violin I.

The "Star" theme and "Wood" themes are first introduced in metal and wood instruments, respectively, highlighting a timbral as well as melodic distinction. Later in the piece these two themes are thoroughly meshed and combined. Symbolically, the purpose of this interweaving is to suggest a fundamental quality of Butler's fiction: Butler uses

stories about space travel and the stars (the "Star" theme) as a vehicle to reveal truths about human life on earth (the "Wood" theme).

The "Fire" theme represents both Octavia Butler's experience with her childhood home burning down and her resulting use of fire as a common motif in her fiction:



FIG 3.6 - "FIRE" THEME, m. 449, Glockenspiel and vibraphone

The melodic intervals of the "Fire" theme first appear in the tremolo strings in the Octavia Speech 1 section. (Note that the unusual enharmonic spelling prevents augmented seconds when this line recurs in the choral parts.) The 6/8 section (Octavia Speech #5) begins with woodwind and brass lines built much more obviously from the "Fire" theme. Ascending sextuplets, associated with the "Fire" music in the woodwind parts, represent fire imagery in a way that tends to be more gestural than thematic, though they are constructed from similar melodic contours and use similar chromaticism. Highly chromatic lines in this piece are generally associated with chaos and destruction, while diatonic lines are associated with saving grace, moments of relief and hope.

This musical score for woodwinds (Piccolo, Flutes, Oboes, Clarinets, Bassoon) illustrates chromaticism associated with the "Fire" theme in measure 203. The score features complex chromatic patterns with dynamic markings like *mf* and *f*, and articulation marks like accents and slurs.

FIG 3.7 - WOODWIND CHROMATICISM ASSOCIATED WITH "FIRE" THEME, m. 203

Also associated with the "Fire" music in the instrumental parts is the choral setting of "Chaos is God's most dangerous face," a melodic setting derived by combining the chromaticism of the "Fire" them with the ascending stepwise motion of the "Star" motive.

This musical score for voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) shows the choral setting of "Chaos is God's most dangerous face" in measure 502. The score includes lyrics and musical notation for each voice part.

FIG 3.8 - CHORAL SETTING OF CHROMATICISM FROM "FIRE" THEME, m. 502

Finally, the "Change" theme has a contrasting melodic contour to the previously introduced themes (downward instead of upward), thereby signifying the idea of change itself. The melody originated with the "All that you touch you change" Earthseed verse. It reappears in the penultimate section with the "Kindness eases change" verse (m. 577), which then leads back into the ascending steps of the "Star" and "Wood" themes.



FIG 3.9 - FIRST CHORAL SETTING OF THE "CHANGE" THEME, m. 404, Soprano

The image displays a musical score for woodwind instruments, specifically measures 70 through 73. The instruments listed on the left are Piccolo (Picc.), Flutes (Fl. 1 and 2), Oboes (Ob. 1 and 2), Bass Clarinet (B♭ Cl.), and Bassoon (Bsn. 1 and 2). The key signature is three flats (B♭, E♭, A♭). The score features a complex, rhythmic melody primarily in the Piccolo and Flute parts, characterized by sixteenth-note patterns. Dynamic markings such as *f* (forte), *dim.* (diminuendo), and *p* (piano) are used to indicate changes in volume. The Oboe and Bass Clarinet parts also contribute to the texture with similar rhythmic motifs. The Bassoon parts are mostly silent in these measures.

FIG 4.2 - EXAMPLE OF GESTURE FROM CANONICAL REPETITION IN WOODWINDS, m. 70.

The most obvious similarity to *Hallucination Spring* is in the use of percussion, most obviously the use of the drum set: unusual in orchestral music, but very much in keeping with the genre-bending tendencies of my compositions in general. (See the "Orchestration" section below for more information on the drum set in this piece.)

The formal structure of *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* is governed by the arrangement of texts, so the overall structure was planned very early in the composition process. Before the composition was fully underway, I was able to map out the *Parable* excerpts into a loose narrative structure, shown in Figure 4.3 below. Through this process I was able to determine which melodic themes would be connected to each text excerpt, which themes would be developed in each section, and what kind of meter and rhythmic energy each

section would build toward. I found the text-centered form to be a great advantage in the effort to visualize and map out this large 29-minute work.

IV. B. Compositional Structure - Tonality

Each section of *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* is in a different key, and the progression of keys forms a pattern, shown in Figure 4.4 below. There are eight sections, defined by the "Octavia speech" spoken interludes. Key relationships group these sections into three larger parts, each of which encompasses two or three smaller sections.

Note: In the following diagrams and prose references, each section called "Octavia Speech [x]" refers to the section of music *after* the correspondingly-numbered speech, continuing until the next speech.

Note on Figure 4.3: The cello solo section is shown in parentheses because it sets up the first speech and foreshadows Part 2, but is not long enough to be a section on its own. The cello solo is not truly a key change, but a mode change from the preceding D \flat major.

<u>Part 1</u>	m. 1-183	Introduction - D \flat major "Darkness brightening"
	m. 184 - 193	(cello solo - c \sharp minor)
	m. 194 - 302	Octavia Speech 1 - g \sharp minor "We have lived before"
	m. 303 - 337	Octavia Speech 2 - g minor "Any change may bear seeds"
<u>Part 2</u>	m. 338 - 384	Octavia Speech 3 - c \sharp minor "All struggles are essentially power struggles"
	m. 385 - 447	Octavia Speech 4 - G \flat major "All that you touch you change"
	m. 448 - 557	Octavia Speech 5 - c minor "Chaos is God's most dangerous face"
<u>Part 3</u>	m. 558 - 709	Solo tenor/Octavia Dialogue - E \flat major "Kindness eases change"
	m. 710 - 775	Octavia Speech 6 - A \flat major "To survive"

FIGURE 4.3 - FORMAL MAP OF SECTIONS AND KEY AREAS

The following diagram shows the tonic notes of each section and the key relationships between sections:

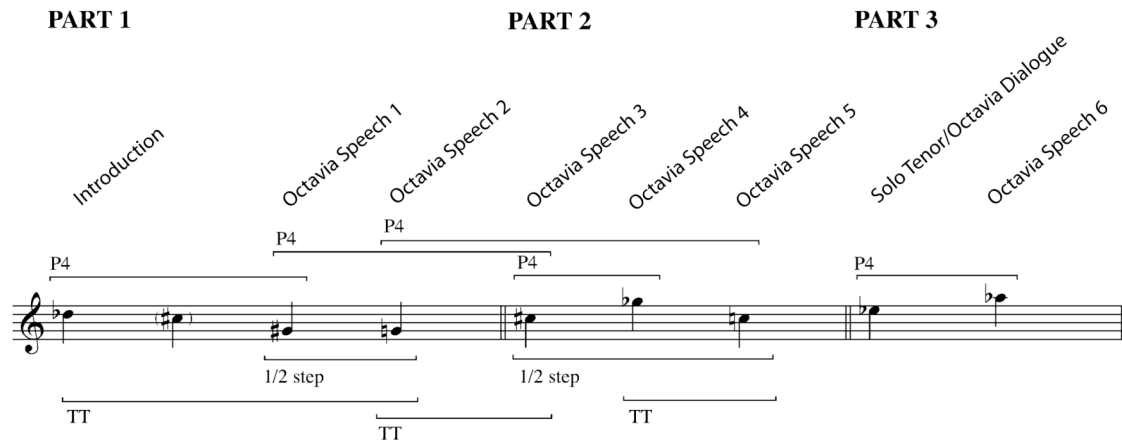


FIGURE 4.4 - TONIC NOTES AND KEY RELATIONSHIPS

The above diagram reveals patterns in the relationships between the key areas of each section. The tonic key areas within Part 1 and Part 2 both encompass tritones, Part 1 from D \flat to G, and Part 2 from G \flat to C. In both sections, the remaining key area is a half-step away from the lower note of this tritone and thus forms a P4 with the upper note of the tritone, assuming enharmonic equivalence (G \sharp - D \flat in Part 1, and C \sharp - G \flat in Part 2.) This pattern of the P4 expanding to the TT connects back to the rising stepwise motion of the elemental motive.

Part 3's key areas encompass a P4 (E \flat - A \flat), but the key area to produce the tritone relationship to complete the pattern (either D or A) never arrives. This apparent lack of resolution in the pattern, perhaps not audible to the listener, nevertheless fits

neatly with the last words of the choral part: "Then let the past go." The piece resolves with a clear cadence in A \flat major, but in this symbolic way (the missing final key) is left open-ended, to represent the unresolved and unexpected ending to Octavia Butler's life, and the continuing impact of Octavia Butler's work going on indefinitely.

Furthermore, connections are established between Part 1 and Part 2 through another set of tritone and P4 relationships, as shown in the diagram. The web is broken at the juncture where Part 2 transitions to Part 3, corresponding to the Solo Tenor/Octavia Dialogue section. The juncture before Part 3 is intentionally disconnected from the network of key relationships, with a minor third, also a relative major/minor relationship, between Part 2's ending key area (C minor) and Part 3's beginning key area (E \flat major). Two other major changes mark this same spot in the piece: 1) the Solo Tenor/Octavia Dialogue section is the only point where a member of the choir interacts directly with the speaker reading Octavia's role, and 2) a drastic mood shift separates the end of Part 2 from the beginning of Part 3. The opening music in Part 3, background music for the spoken dialogue between the speaker and solo tenor, begins with an extended C minor chord, providing a musical bridge over the drastic mood shift.

The ending of Part 2 represents the sheer chaos of human power struggles and the darkest side of human nature, with music constructed primarily from the "Fire" theme and the fragmented version of the elemental motive. The beginning of Part 3, by contrast, is the return of hope. This section brings back the "Change" melody in the alto solo, set with

the "Kindness eases change" verse, followed by a reprised meshing of the "Star" and "Wood" themes, leading toward a hopeful ending.

IV. C. Compositional Structure - Text/music connection

Both the choral and instrumental parts in *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* originated with the text of the Earthseed verses from the *Parable* novels. The first step in the compositional process was to choose which verses to include, based on musical qualities of the text and thematic connections to Butler's life. The next step was setting each of these chosen verses to the melody it seemed to naturally suggest. The process of choosing melodic contours and rhythms for each verse was, as often occurs in my composition, primarily based on an instinctive sense of text setting, usually realized by singing the words. A particular melody typically stands out as most appropriate for the words very early on in the process. Those melodies went on to shape the instrumental writing as much as the choral writing.

In most cases I deliberately designed a symbolic or word-painting connection between the melody chosen for the text and the imagery present in the text. The first example of this phenomenon is the "Star" motive, in which the rising motion of the melodic line lands on the word "star" at the melody's high point (Part 1/Octavia Speech 1, m. 267). Another example would be the chromaticism of the "Fire" motive (Part 2/Octavia Speech 5, m. 449).

PART 1

Introduction

After the first statement of the "Star" theme with metallic instruments (flutes, trumpet, and glockenspiel, m. 1-8), the strings introduce the elemental motive as the first gesture of the "Wood" theme:



FIGURE 4.5 - FIRST ENTRANCE OF "WOOD" THEME, m. 15, Violin I

The first choral entrances follow the same pattern as the string entrances, encapsulating the elemental motive, leading into the "Wood" theme proper.

This introduction of the "Wood" theme concludes with a three-note motive built from rising skips (a minor third followed by a perfect fifth, m. 43-46 and 61-68), which will be seen again as a central part of the "Change" melody, set to the line "changes you."

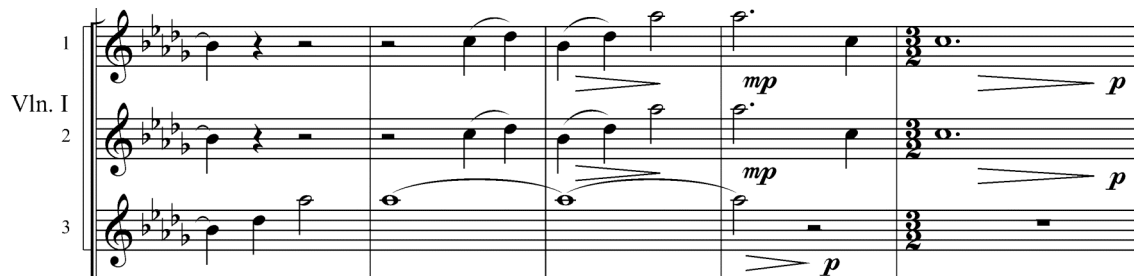


FIGURE 4.6 - THREE-NOTE RISING MOTIVE FROM "CHANGE" THEME, m. 43, Violin I

Very early in the compositional process, the words "darkness brightening" suggested the elemental motive. The elemental motive cascades through the four choral parts to symbolize the first rays of sunlight clearing the horizon.

In the first articulated percussive moment, at m. 69, the timpani and metallic percussion touch off a cascading waterfall of woodwind sixteenth notes based on part of the C minor blues scale: only [C, F, G \flat , B \flat , C], while the C minor blues scale would contain [C, E \flat , F, G \flat , G, B \flat , C]. The minor blues scale returns in other locations throughout the piece, often as the source for similar fast woodwind lines. Here the burst of activity is calmed rather quickly (m. 75-83), easing down into alternating sixteenth notes in the whole-step pattern of the elemental motive.

As previously noted, the "Wood" and "Star" themes are contrasted and interwoven throughout the piece. This connection between the two themes was very much by design. The first instance of contrast is the first eight measures followed by the "Wood" theme entrance at m. 9. The first instance of interweaving begins at m. 124, where the "Wood" melody is first set to the words "Stars casting their cool, pale, glinting light."

The second major percussive moment begins at measure 133, where the timpani hit again sets the woodwinds off in a flurry of sixteenth-note activity based on a D \flat pentatonic scale. Each of these flurries of activity (including the next one at m. 141) coincides with the entrance of a new unison line in the chorus: "Darkness give shape to the light, as

light shapes darkness" for the first, and "Death shapes life, as life shapes death" for the second.

At m. 149 the same pattern (choral entrance touching off woodwind activity) starts again, but stays this time, with the woodwinds continuing in a thirds-based pattern more connected to the D \flat major scale than the pentatonic scale. Measure 163 reintroduces the "Star" theme, this time in both choir and brass, set in the choir with the line "to the light." This buildup into the metaphorical light is followed by a calming in the fast woodwind activity, with statements of the elemental motive in the strings and brass (m. 171-182).

The positive energy of this section leads to the transitional cello solo at m. 183, the D \flat reinterpreted as C \sharp for a melody influenced by the C \sharp minor blues scale. The cello and alto solos both symbolize Octavia Butler's unusually low voice. The alto solos in this piece are often set to text in the imperative voice, as if Butler herself is speaking directly to the audience in another way besides the spoken narrative. This same C \sharp minor melody is later found in the alto solo set to the words "any change may bear seeds of benefit. . . any change may bear seeds of harm." (Octavia speech #2, m. 304). Thus the cello solo is a warning commentary, much like Butler considered her books to be warning commentaries on the direction she saw American society heading, beginning to hint at the chaos that could be in store for us in the not-too-distant future.

Octavia Speech #1

This first speech introduces Butler, her family background, the hardships her mother and ancestors survived, and the hard work they went through to give her the life she had.

The music following Octavia Speech #1 opens with the first hints of chromaticism associated with the "Fire" theme. The gestural distribution of upward chromatic lines through the woodwinds, combined with the 6-part high string *tremolo glissandi* and use of the slapsticks in both the Percussion 1 & 2 parts, is intended to suggest a forest of dry leaves or sticks catching fire. This initial "Fire" gesture alternates with the "Star" theme, the "Star" theme re-appearing in a louder chorale-like form, in the brass choir with support from the low strings.

Finally, at measure 218, the "Wood" and "Star" themes are fully integrated - the "Wood" theme finally appearing in the metallic instruments (all brass, with low woodwinds added), and the "Star" theme in the low strings. The rising quarter notes associated with the "Star" theme take over the full orchestral texture (ending with a final statement of the elemental motive in m. 244-245), but this taking-over includes the instruments formerly associated with the "Wood" theme, so the effect is much darker than the previous setting of the "Star" theme. This rising quarter-note motive serves as both the source material and the pitch reference for the choral line in the following section.

The text appearing in the choral parts starting at m. 251 is the original text that first inspired the "Star" motive in the pre-composition stage. The high note arrives on the word "star": "We have lived before, we will live again. We will be silk, stone, mind, star. We will be scattered, gathered. . . We will live, and we will serve life."

The musical score is for four voices: Soprano (S), Alto (A), Tenor (T), and Bass (B). It is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The tempo/mood is marked *mp*. The lyrics are: "We will be mind, we will be star. We will be scattered, gathered. . . We will live, and we will serve life." The three-note rising motive (ascending minor third, ascending perfect fifth) is used for the words "live, and we will serve life." in the final phrase.

FIGURE 4.7 - WORD-PAINTING AND THREE-NOTE RISING MOTIVE FROM "CHANGE" THEME, m. 260, choir

The line "we will serve life" is set to the same rising three-note motive (ascending minor third, ascending perfect fifth) that appears at the end of the "Change" melody on the words "changes you" and also concludes the "Wood" theme in the introductory string material. Thus the "Change" melody links the melodic expansion of the "Wood" theme with the choral setting of the "Star" theme.

Particularly noteworthy is the word painting on the words "we will be scattered," where the lines break up into counterpoint between the sections, and "we will be gathered," where the tenor and bass lines return in parallel harmony. The idea of human isolation caused by difference, perhaps analogous to Butler's own isolation as a child, figures prominently in her fiction. Throughout her stories and novels, particularly in the *Parable* series, Butler shows us that bridging the gaps between us and forming human connections, even unusual ones, is the saving grace that makes the dystopian future more survivable. For instance, Olamina in the *Parable* books refers to meetings with her band of Earthseed followers as "Gatherings," and the group jointly develops healing rituals that help them deal with the brutality and chaos around them. Thus the symbolism of "scattered" and "gathered" reflects the contrast between human isolation and connection that threads its way through this piece, Butler's fiction, and Butler's life.

Following the choral section, the subdivided strings break into independent counterpoint with an extension of the "Star" melody, just as they did in the Introduction section when the "Wood" motive is first introduced (starting at m. 9). In fact, the endings of each of these sections (m. 41-47 and m. 294-302) share the same melodic material derived from the end of the "Star" melody in its choral version.

Symbolically, the interweaving of "Star" and "Wood" represents the overarching earth/star duality in Butler's fiction mentioned above, but also connects to the more specific meaning of the "We have lived before" passage. Silk, wood, and stone are

earthly elements, connecting to the down-to-earth and realistic - sometimes graphically, violently realistic - aspects of the *Parable* story, and of the lives of Butler's ancestors. Mind and star are otherworldly, pointing the Earthseed community toward what Olamina sees as the destiny of man, to gather and work together on earth, then leave the earth and scatter to other planets around other stars. Hard work and daily acts of kindness on earth used as motivation leading to a goal beyond the terrestrial - this is the stuff of the Earthseed religion. By carefully controlling the level of interaction between the "Wood" and "Star" themes, then finally integrating them entirely, I designed the music to reflect this narrative theme.

Octavia Speech #2

The speech in this section tells the story of Octavia Butler's childhood experiences with fire, the first introduction in this piece to the destructive side of change.

The musical section begins with an alto solo repeating the melody from the cello solo connecting the Introduction and Octavia Speech #1 sections, with the clarinet solo as counterpoint. This solo is set in a G minor blues scale, [G, B \flat , C, D \flat , D, F, G], referencing both the blues scales of my own *Zoey Bell* and the gospel music that Olamina grew up with in her father's church in *Parable of the Sower*.

Measure 317 brings back the chromatic "Fire" references in the woodwinds and *tremolo* strings. This is the first recognizable appearance of the "Fire" theme's melody, though

obscured by each note being dispersed to a different part within the *divisi* strings. During this section the alto solo melody (originally the cello solo) returns in the brass choir.

At the climax of this melody, measure 330, the direction of the 16th note woodwind lines reverses, and the previously highly chromatic notes begin conforming to the G minor blues scale, to match the blues scale in the alto/cello/brass melody. The remaining music in this section combines the "Fire" theme, interlaced through the strings, with appearances of the elemental motive in the brass instruments, with percussion added to build up to one of the first major climactic gestures in the piece.

The instrumental music following the alto solo represents the "seeds of change" referred to in the solo's text. The "seeds of benefit" are the bluesy scale-based sixteenth-note runs in the woodwinds; the "seeds of harm" are represented by the destructive potential of fire in the strings.

PART 2

Octavia Speech #3

The speech that begins this section recounts Butler's youthful experience watching her mother work as a domestic laborer, watching her mother going in and out of back doors and being insulted because of her race. This is a story Butler brings up in several of the published interviews about her life, in reference to her perceptions about the African-American experience. She says "[a]s a child I did not blame them for their disgusting

behavior, but I blamed my mother for taking it. . . . As I got older I realized that this is what kept me fed, and this is what kept a roof over my head."¹⁷

This same theme, human power relations, and how humans deal with the power relations endemic to the societies they live in, appears in various forms throughout Butler's fiction. In the *Parable* series, this theme takes the form of an imagined near-future permanent economic meltdown, leading to poverty, widespread brutality, and the return of outright slavery. In the *Xenogenesis* series, Butler focuses on the power relations between the aliens and the humans, how the aliens take over an Earth destroyed by nuclear war, thereby becoming the power figures.

The music for Octavia Speech #3 is based on a funk-influenced version of the elemental motive, a two-eighth-note motive linked to the word "power." Throughout this section the blues scale is the basis for the melodic and chordal material. The idea of "power" is referenced by the first appearance of the drum set in the percussion section. The chromatic lines in the woodwinds hearken back to the "Fire" motive, as the symbol of fire throughout this piece represents destructive power and potential.

The funk influence is most present in the drum set rhythm, as accompanied by accents in the timpani part and chords in the vibraphone. It is also there in the instrumentation,

¹⁷ Interview with Charles Rowell, 1/31/97, *Callaloo* 20.1 (1997, journal on-line), 47-66, available from <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/callaloo/v020/20.1butler.html>; accessed 4/8/09.

where a jazz-band brass section plays in unison along with the "Power" bass line. On the second repetition of the verse, the horns and strings enter with sustained chords, breaking the jazz-band sound but filling out the minor-blues harmony:

Figure 4.8 is a musical score for a section of a piece, specifically measures 371. It features a brass section (Horns, B♭ Trumpets, Trombones, and Tuba) playing in unison. The choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass) sings the lyrics: "pow er strug gles, pow er strug-gles. Who will rule who will lead, who will de fine, re fine, con fine, de sign." The percussion (Perc. 1 and Perc. 2) provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The timpani (Timp.) has a tuning instruction: "Tune G# to G, C# to C".

FIGURE 4.8 - BRASS, CHOIR, AND PERCUSSION, m. 371

Octavia Speech #4

The "Change" theme is the first major melodic element in the piece to begin with descending instead of ascending melodic motion, thereby literally representing the "change" in its textual material. This was the first section of the piece I composed, the melody that seemed to naturally fit with the words in the corresponding verse.

The speech leading into this first choral appearance of the "Change" theme tells the story of how Octavia Butler first decided to become a writer, during a childhood that was far from happy. For her, writing fiction was an escape from the crippling shyness and bullying she grew up with. This was not pure psychological escapism; rather, it led to her career as one of the most influential science fiction authors of her generation. Thus Butler created change for herself. Her interest in writing, her desire to build another world where things could be better, was the saving grace that allowed her to transcend the negative experiences of her youth.

For the character Lauren Olamina, finding allies in a world gone awry is the focus of her life. Olamina builds the Earthseed religion out of a terrible situation, much as Butler built her own career from an imperfect childhood.

Structurally, this section of *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* functions as a respite between two sections where the "Fire" theme figures prominently, and thus is the "eye of the storm" in Part 2. Metaphorically, both the text and the musical content of this section represent the moments of saving grace referred to later in the "Kindness eases Change" verse. The music, then, metaphorically accomplishes the same goal as Butler's youthful writings, the same goal as Olamina's Earthseed verses: building a small moment of peace, beauty, and order from the chaotic substance of the world.

Octavia Speech #5

The speech beginning this section is the darkest in mood, and leads to the darkest part of the piece. This is where, as described in the text, "apparent stability disintegrates," the apparent stability represented by the diatonic, melodic 3/4 material of the previous section.

Here the "Fire" theme and its associated chromaticism builds to a peak, taking over all sections of the orchestration. For the first time the "Fire" chromaticism extends into the choral part as well, representing the chaotic forces of Change taking over to dispel and destroy the calm and simple world established in the previous section. Extensive melisma in the choral writing forms yet another startling departure from the simple, mostly syllabic setting of the "Change" melody in Octavia Speech #4. These fast, melismatic lines ascend through the choral parts, representing the inexorable growth of the fire from countless individual bursts of flame.

This is also the only section where the choir speaks instead of sings. The effect is intended to be as disturbing and jarring as the words themselves. The spoken part starts unmeasured and unsynchronized, in keeping with the meaning of the words:

When apparent stability disintegrates,
As it must,
People give in

To fear and depression,

To need and greed.

. . . .

They struggle,

One against one,

Group against group,

For survival, position, power.

Thus the setting of these words is word-painting, representing the "one against one" struggle quite literally. As a similar example of word-painting, the choir re-synchronizes to speak the following line together in rhythm:

until one of them becomes

A leader

Most will follow,

Or a tyrant,

Most fear.

Immediately following the spoken choral section is a musical representation of the same phenomenon. The orchestra plays short disjointed sixteenth-note motives, with no doublings and each player performing individually, the strings more obviously *divisi* than

before. The sixteenth-note motives are taken from a fragmented version of the "Wood" theme, to represent the idea of "splintering":

The image shows a musical score for strings, measures 532-535. The score is written for Violins I & II, Violas, Cellos, and Double Basses. The music features fragmented sixteenth-note motives from the "Wood" theme, with dynamic markings like *ff* and *f*. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

FIGURE 4.9 - SPLINTERING OF "WOOD" THEME, m. 532, Strings

The chaotic spitting-out of fragmentary motives gradually resolves into a *tutti* chord, but this chord itself is not a harmonic resolution at all. The cluster that fully arrives in m. 550 is intended to be huge, dissonant, even menacing in its effect. This chord represents the "tyrant," the ultimate worst-case scenario in human power relations, the darkest side of human nature. The notes making up this tone cluster, D, E \flat , F, and G, in an earlier incarnation were the melodic notes of the "Star" theme. Here these same notes, by being juxtaposed simultaneously instead of in ascending melodic motion, are utterly transformed in their effect:

Intense cluster. . .

The musical score for measures 544-548 is a complex orchestration for the wind section. It begins with a 'Picc.' part, followed by Flutes (1 and 2), Oboes (1 and 2), B♭ Clarinets (1 and 2), Bass Clarinet, Bassoon (1 and 2), Horns (1, 2, 3, and 4), B♭ Trumpets (1, 2, and 3), Trombones (1, 2, and 3), and Tuba. The music is characterized by a dense, intense cluster of notes, with dynamics ranging from sub. p to sfz. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

FIGURE 4.10 - SPLINTERED "WOOD" THEME TRANSITION TO "TYRANT" CHORD, m. 544, winds

Part 3

Solo Tenor/Octavia Dialogue

This dialogue is taken from an essay by Octavia Butler entitled "A Few Rules for Predicting the Future," first published in *Essence* magazine in May 2000. In her essay the conversation is recounted in quotations, while I have chosen to dramatize it using a

speaker chosen from the tenor section of the choir. The tenor plays a young student questioning Butler about her dystopian world-building, whether she believes dystopia is likely to come about in our world, and how she believes we can stop it from happening. This speech represents the return of hope, after the fiery, chaotic material of the Octavia Speech #5 section. The hope is not for a global, large-scale, *deus ex machina* saving humanity from our own worst impulses, but for the small moments of grace and kindness among the chaos: "there are thousands of answers-- at least. You can be one of them if you choose to be."¹⁸

Butler's work is about differences between people, the power relations that result from those differences, and the necessity of getting past differences to find deeper connections. "Embrace diversity," begins an Earthseed verse which I did not choose for this piece (the wording seemed a bit too on-the-nose and insufficiently lyrical for musical treatment). At heart, though, this is what Butler's work in the *Parable* and *Xenogenesis* books is all about. This is also part of what Butler's life teaches us; growing up "different" in so many ways forced her to consider difference, power, and the nature of human connection in a way that many of us never think about. She studied history, how humans in all societies have repeatedly destroyed each other over our differences. She could clearly see what humanity might face in the future, how we might eventually destroy ourselves as a species if we don't learn to cope with our differences.

¹⁸ Octavia E. Butler, "A Few Rules for Predicting the Future," *Essence* (May 2000), 165-66.

Forming a relationship, finding a connection with someone different from you - it doesn't change the chaotic system of human society, but it is a small saving grace that makes the impossible system a little bit less impossible. Cruelty and suffering are inherent to life in this universe, but through small moments of saving grace, we can make it a little bit better, a little bit at a time.

Up to this point in *In Memoriam Octavia Butler*, the choir and speaker operate independently. The idea of reaching out to form an unusual connection is symbolized by separating one singer from the choir to join the Octavia speaker's stage space and metaphorical world. To the text "Kindness eases Change, love quiets fear," the Change motive starts out inflected with the blues-influenced scale and rhythms first introduced in the previous cello and alto solos (Introduction, m. 183, and Octavia Speech #2, m. 304), then transitions to a standard E \flat major:



FIGURE 4.11 - ALTO SOLO BASED ON "CHANGE" MELODY, m. 578.

The "Change" melody continues to fit with the words of this section, up through the line "sweet and powerful positive obsession." The melody for the next two words, "blunts pain," is taken from the very end of the "Change" melody, the same three-note motive (ascending minor third, ascending perfect fifth) previously introduced with the words "changes you" (Octavia Speech #4, m. 410-411) and also previously used to end the

"Wood" motive in the string parts of the Introduction section (m. 43-46 and 61-68).

Finally, the ascending quarter notes of the "Star" theme return to the choir at m. 590, set to the line "of our chosen struggles," thereby concluding this semi-bluesy version of the "Change" melody with a new ending.

If it is partly the job of *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* to highlight common themes between Butler's work and her life, perhaps the aspect of this text most closely related to her real life is the line about "a sweet and powerful positive obsession." Human connection alone is not sufficient to combat the darker side of human nature and help prevent the dystopian outcomes she warns against. In her essay by the same name,¹⁹ Butler encourages younger writers by defining positive obsession as constructive work, the kind of work that filled Butler's otherwise rather solitary life. There is still another connection to the Earthseed verses here, particularly the verse that includes the line "Pray working. Pray learning, planning, doing. Pray creating, teaching, reaching."²⁰

While human connections generate single moments of light and hope in Butler's stories, constructive obsessions such as Olamina's fixation on Earthseed do the same on a larger time scale. The Earthseed community Olamina dedicates her life to building becomes a physical and emotional refuge from a brutal world. On still another level, through her storytelling Butler reaches out to us with the light generated by her own positive obsession with writing.

¹⁹ Butler, "Positive Obsession," *Bloodchild and Other Stories*, 128.

²⁰ Butler, *Sower*, 294.

Following the line about positive obsession, at m. 599, the strings bring back the chorale-like texture based on the "Wood" theme, as previously seen in the Introduction section. The choir music is still based on the "Star" theme, also previously seen in the Introduction. This section is an obvious revisitation of the material from m. 251-287, in which the "Wood" and "Star" themes are similarly distributed and integrated between the choir and strings. This section is intended to feel like returning from a journey through the fire, back to the down-to-earth work and sky-bound hope that characterizes Earthseed, just as Olamina survived years of extreme brutality to finally achieve her mission.

Measure 637 begins a repetition of this same material, but this time with a drum set pattern added, along with the two-note bass line figure based on the elemental motive, both of which were previously introduced in the Octavia Speech #3 section ("All struggles are essentially power struggles"). In terms of timbre and texture, this section intentionally evokes my previous chamber orchestra piece *Hallucination Spring*; ever since composing that piece I have been interested in doing more with that same orchestral sound while also including a choir. To balance out Octavia Speech #3, the drums needed to return, but in a more hopeful context. Here they represent power harnessed and transformed for constructive, positive obsession, contrasted with the fiery chaos of the "power struggles" with which the drum set was previously associated.

The "scattered/gathered" word painting returns in the choral parts, as does the rising three-note motive from the end of the "Change" melody (minor third, perfect fifth), this

time on the words "we will serve life." Once the verse ends on "we will serve life," measure 681 brings back the original statement of the "Star" theme in the woodwinds. This is followed by contrapuntal material interweaving the "Star" motive and the three-note conclusion of the "Change" melody, leading in to the final section of the piece:

The image displays a musical score for woodwinds, measures 685 through 690. The score is written for a Piccolo, two Flutes (Fl.), two Oboes (Ob.), two Clarinets in B-flat (Bb Cl.), and a Bassoon (Bsn.). The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/8. The Piccolo and Flutes play a melodic line starting on a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The Oboes and Clarinets enter in measure 688 with a melodic line starting on a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The Bassoon enters in measure 688 with a melodic line starting on a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The score includes dynamic markings of *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *f* (forte). The Piccolo and Flutes play a melodic line starting on a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The Oboes and Clarinets enter in measure 688 with a melodic line starting on a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The Bassoon enters in measure 688 with a melodic line starting on a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The score includes dynamic markings of *mp* (mezzo-piano) and *f* (forte).

FIGURE 4.12 - "STAR" AND "CHANGE" THEMES, m. 685, Woodwinds

Octavia Speech #6

After a very short, hopeful conclusion to the spoken-word material, the concluding section begins with one *a cappella* choral line followed by the last alto solo. This solo is a very clear example of the imperative voice, Octavia Butler speaking to the audience through the musical as well as the spoken material.

The entire remainder of the choral music is set to the words "then let the past go," with "then let the past" set to a rising step/skip pattern and "go" set to contrapuntal statements of the elemental motive. Throughout this section the entire orchestra participates in a growing swell of ascending stepwise "Star"-like music. This transformed version of the "Star" theme, finally fully integrated into the entire orchestra in its original form, connects to the ending of *Parable of the Talents*. Olamina, having survived slavery and violence during the darkest years of the United States in the 21st century, leads the Earthseed religion to finally achieve its destiny of space travel and colonization of distant planets. This metaphorical ascent to the stars is represented by the musical treatment of the "Star" theme in the closing section.

The difference between the opening and closing statements of the "Star" theme is the orchestration - in the first statement (m. 1-8) the metallic instruments are featured in a high register for a feeling of icy brightness, while here the "Star" theme takes its warm, dark orchestration from the initial introduction of the "Wood" theme (m. 9-68) - wood instruments, low register, legato articulations in the woodwinds. This re-orchestration of the "Star" thematic material is intended to represent the seemingly starry-eyed hope for Earthseed's seemingly impossible goal, finally achieved in reality through hard work here on earth. It also represents Butler's own statement about one of her stories: "By the end of it, my hope had come back. It always seems to do that," from Octavia Speech #6.

These lines build contrapuntally to a final cadence in which the elemental motive is finally reversed - the last "Go" set to a long descending whole step instead of a short ascending one. This final reversal represents the arrival and closure at the end of Lauren Olamina's life. Octavia Butler always meant to write a third *Parable* book, to be entitled *Parable of the Trickster*, telling the story of a manned Earthseed ship and the colonists fending for themselves far from Earth.²¹ She never got the chance to write that book. My hope is that the final closure at the end of *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* might help to bring solace, in the face of Butler herself being taken away so suddenly.

²¹ "Octavia E. Butler: Persistence," *Locus* 44, no. 6 (June 2000; on-line); available from <http://www.locusmag.com/2000/Issues/06/Profile.html>; Internet, accessed April 8, 2009.

V. Orchestration

V. A. Themes and Orchestration

Many of the orchestrational details in *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* have already been discussed under "Text/Music Connections," as the orchestration, like all other compositional decisions in this piece, is rooted in the meaning of the text, whether directly or indirectly.

In the beginning, my plan was to play off the contrast between the metallic instruments (brass, flute, and metallic percussion) and the wood instruments (strings and other woodwinds), relating this timbral contrast to the "Star" and "Wood" themes respectively. As I got further into the compositional process, these two themes began to intertwine more intricately, and their orchestrational settings became more mixed than separated, the treatment of the themes always allocated to particular instrumental groups with the meaning of each section of text in mind.

V. B. Brass and Woodwinds

One of the first sections of music I composed for this piece was the Octavia Speech #1 section, with the "Fire" music in strings and woodwinds alternating with the "Star" music in the brass choir. This section was the section that convinced me it was necessary to write for full symphony orchestra and not a smaller chamber orchestra. I felt that the "Star" chords, to achieve full impact, needed the complete brass choir. Trying the same material with a smaller number of brass players never provided the same impact.

The woodwind section exhibits a very high level of independence between parts. This phenomenon is very typical of my writing. One of my favorite techniques is to start a scalar or modal technical passage in one woodwind part, then write canonical entries of the same music in the other woodwind parts, starting on subsequent beats in the measure. This technique first appears very near the beginning, at the first percussive articulation point at measure 69 in the Introduction section. Much of the "Fire" chromatic writing in the woodwinds is patterned similarly, with individual entrances for each player, but with similar chromatic motion in all parts. When the effect is intended to be chaotic, the notes in the individual woodwind parts are even more independent. It is only in a few major points of formal articulation that the woodwind section comes together to play similar material all at once:

Octavia Speech #1, m. 241-245 - rising quarter notes, "Star" theme

Octavia Speech #2, m. 335-337 - sixteenth-note pattern built on G minor blues scale

Octavia Speech #5, m. 547-554 - dissonant sustained chord based on notes of "Star" theme (D, E^b, F, G), referred to previously in this analysis as the "Tyranny" chord

Octavia Speech #6, m. 694 - woodwind *tutti* chord resulting from contrapuntal juxtaposition of "Star" theme and three-note ending motive of "Change" melody

Octavia Speech #6, m. 773-775 - final cadence

Other noteworthy features of the woodwind orchestration include the clarinet counterpoint to the "bluesy" alto solo in m. 304-315, and the use of flute as a metallic instrument along with brass in those metaphorical cases (including the first introduction of the "Star" theme in m. 1-8) where the metallic and wood instruments are separated.

V. C. Strings

The most unusual feature of the string orchestration is the division of each violin section into three parts. Very often the sections do all play the same notes, just as in traditional orchestral scoring, but there are sufficient *divisi* parts to make three separate parts necessary.

The *divisi* parts fall into two categories. In many cases the contrapuntal material required that the violins be divided into groups of three instead of two, so I split them up into six groups and grouped the last group of first violins together with the first group of second violins. This will result in some non-synchronous bowing, which could possibly be managed at the conductor's discretion with creative seating arrangements. In several of these spots I did attempt to cut the viola line and give the third violin line to the violas, but was unsatisfied with losing the "missing" notes in the contrapuntal structure. The violin *tremolo glissandi* are always *divisi*, to represent individual sparks setting off the fire.

The second category of *divisi* includes the sections where all six violin parts and two viola parts are independent, typically the sections associated with the idea of chaos in the musical narrative.

Other orchestrational uses of strings important to the musical narrative include the use of jazz *pizzicato* in the double basses, which fits with the drum set and the general atmosphere of the Octavia Speech #3 ("Power") section. The cello was chosen for the "bluesy" solo in the transition between the Introduction and Octavia Speech #1 sections to represent Octavia Butler's unusually low voice, and to reference the section immediately following Octavia Speech #2, where the alto solo returns with the same melody.

V. D. Drum Set and Percussion

The use of drum set in *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* is in part a reference back to my earlier chamber orchestra piece *Hallucination Spring*. I was pleased with the way that piece worked in performance and I wanted very much to continue that same idea in another piece. The other impetus for using drum set in this particular orchestra piece was a personal event in my life, the loss of my student Jeffrey Korba in an automobile accident in November 2007. Jeff was at an early stage in his musical development, but was one of the best two or three drummers I've ever known in terms of raw talent. He never got to write or play all the music he could have written, just as Octavia Butler never got to write the books she could have written. The similarity of the sudden loss due to

tragic accident connects these two people in my mind, and in this piece. The use of drum set is partly a hidden memorial for Jeff.

The idea of contrasting wood and metal instruments, placed in evolving relationships to the "Wood," "Star," and "Fire" themes, continues into the percussion section. There is a consistent connection between the "Star" theme and the vibes and glockenspiel, starting from the very first measure and echoing throughout the piece. Another example of such a relationship is the use of slapsticks in m. 195-198 (the beginning of Octavia Speech #1), to represent wood branches breaking in the fire as the "Fire" theme is introduced.

Timpani, while not literally a wood instrument, is often associated with the "wood" theme, as in m. 218-244 (later in Octavia Speech #1).

Beyond the drum set, much use of percussion in this piece falls into one of these metaphorical categories. Other uses of percussion include buildups to climactic moments and a contribution to the sense of chaos in the sections referencing fire and chaos. In some sections the low percussion (timpani and bass drum) repeat single hits to create a "heartbeat" or a sense of ominous foreboding. One of the most prominent examples of this technique is the 6/8 meter "fire and chaos" music in the Octavia Speech #5 section. Bass drum and timpani also serve as metaphorical glue for the integration of the "Star" and "Wood" themes, for instance in Octavia Speech #1 at m. 218.

The use of high percussion (snare drum and tambourine) for timekeeping and pulse definition is limited to small moments where repetitive high-frequency sound is both rhythmically necessary and timbrally appropriate. In some sections, for instance, the woodwinds have many small independent entrances of fast sixteenth notes to time accurately; adding percussion can help in this challenge.

The use of vibes and glockenspiel as primary percussion instruments in *Hallucination Spring* also informs the percussion writing in *In Memoriam Octavia Butler*, not just for the metaphorical connection between the "Star" theme and metallic instruments, but for the specific sound of those instruments with the drum set together.

V. E. Voices

I believe that delving into the details of text-setting falls perhaps most naturally into the orchestration section of this paper, as the relevant questions involve a similar "zoomed-in" level of detail. Text-setting is one area of composition that I have always accomplished intuitively, which makes it somewhat difficult to address the mechanics of the process.

While taking the "Reference and Research Materials in Music" course at the University of Texas at Austin, I wrote a research paper on instructive books and articles in the field of text-setting, so I have a clear idea of the questions they address. Some sources focus on the physical act of word setting: the process of deciding which words should be

placed on which beats and what pitches and durations should be assigned to those words. Other sources approach the subject from one step back-- analyzing point of view, persona, and form, exploring how these poetic aspects of the text influence the music.

The first major decision I made was the use of narration, which has been described as a "melodramatic device, nonetheless it has become an accepted practice with audiences when performed in a convincing manner."²² It did, however, take quite some time to settle on exactly which quotations from which interviews would be used in the piece. I believe the right "Barbara Jordan"-type voice could carry this narration off in performance and represent the personality behind the words.

The choral music represents the voice of Lauren Olamina. By juxtaposing the narration with the sung verses, as I mentioned above, it becomes possible to draw connections between Butler's work and her life. But also the verses provide another voice, another perspective, much the way *Parable of the Talents* is written from the dual perspective of Olamina and her daughter, much the way all of Butler's work asks us to look at human relationships (sometimes through fictional human/alien relationships) from all sides.

Though I kept special effects to a limited range of the piece, the special effects used in the choir in the chaotic music of Octavia Speech #5 are also worth noting. The speaking parts are mostly non-specified rhythms, not intended to be particularly intelligible, except

²² Robert Stephan Hines, *Choral Composition: A Handbook for Composers, Arrangers, Conductors, and Singers*. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2001), 52.

for the one moment where all the speaking voices come together in the same rhythm, the "tyrant" line in Octavia Speech #5 (m. 540-543). Here the "x" noteheads are used at the suggestion of one of the sources on text-setting, Robert Stephan Hines's *Choral Composition*.²³

One important point made by Virgil Thomson in his *Music With Words: A Composer's View* is his admonition that "the instrumental contribution must take the lead, give tempos and pacings, create a musical structure and sustain it."²⁴ Also crucial is the ability of the orchestral parts to provide a pitch reference for each choral entrance, which I hope I have accomplished, one way or another, in each section of this piece.

Thomson also suggests breaking text into "word-groups"²⁵ before deciding on musical lines; this Octavia Butler has essentially done for me, by dividing the Earthseed verses into separate lines, with a very small number of words per line.

All of the sources I located on text-setting agree that musical accents on particular words can be created with longer note lengths, metrical positioning, or higher relative pitch. They agree on questions of idiomatic vocal writing and comfort for the singer, particularly on choices of vowel and consonant sounds. Several writers specifically caution the composer against pairing extremely high notes with closed vowels (long "a,"

²³ *ibid.*, 55.

²⁴ Virgil Thomson, *Music With Words: A Composer's View*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 75.

²⁵ *ibid.*, 17.

long "e," etc.) or ending vocal works with sibilant sounds like "s" or "sh." There also seems to be a prevailing consensus that vocal lines should be kept in a moderate, comfortable tessitura and taken into the highest registers mainly in climactic sections. Each of the writers also promotes some variation on the theory that while metrically accented notes should generally match the accented syllables in the text, good text setting does not follow an exclusively declamatory style or attempt to imitate speech too closely.

I have attempted to follow these principles in my choral writing, while also deliberately breaking the "rules" in particular moments for a striking effect. For instance, the zenith of a melodic line in choral music often coincides with a climactic point in the orchestra. One example would be the soprano high G on "to the light," at measure 169 in the Introduction section, which lands at the same location as the largest brass chord in the phrase and high point of the section. Similarly, the previously discussed use of extensive melisma is only present in conjunction with the "fire and chaos" music of Octavia Speech #5, so that note length and phrase length would also coincide with high points in the musical form.

The use of word painting, on the other hand, is a source of much disagreement within the set of sources I was able to gather. Word painting is treated as everything from a great tradition since ancient days (as in Hines's book) to a "naïve" and "wearisome" banality.²⁶ Part of this disparity seems attributable to differing definitions of the term; some appear

²⁶Archibald T. Davison, *The Technique of Choral Composition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1945), 146.

to be using "word painting" to mean only the very most literal examples (such as a rising melodic line on the words "He ascended into heaven").²⁷ Other more subtle text-music interplays might still be included within the umbrella term "word painting." Gordon Jacob warns that composers must use the music to reflect the mood of the poem as a whole and not "over-paint" each individual word; he cites the "danger of a song disintegrating into a series of fragments."²⁸ Calvin S. Brown, one of the fathers of the academic field of word and music studies, also weighs in on the word painting debate by quoting two early English authors who disparage the technique as childish and shallow,²⁹ although he then goes on to show how word painting in the hands of a skilled composer can still result in "excellent music" despite such a "puerile approach to the problems of vocal music."³⁰ By my own definition, word-painting is an essential component of the text-music relations discussed in the previous section of this paper.

²⁷ibid., 149.

²⁸Gordon Jacob, *The Composer and His Art*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1955.), 75.

²⁹Calvin S. Brown, *Music and Literature: A Comparison of the Arts* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1948), 53-54.

³⁰ibid., 61.

VI. Conclusion

Structurally, the sections of *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* encompass a series of ascents and descents, from starry-eyed wonder to fiery chaos and back again, always with a sense that the entire spectrum is essential to human experience. "Darkness gives shape to the light, as light shapes darkness. Death shapes life as life shapes death."³¹

The experience of writing *In Memoriam Octavia Butler* was cathartic and important for me on a personal level. I had not anticipated the time it would take to process my feelings about the death of the writer I most admired, nor the emotional weight that the death of my student would add to Butler's death in my mind. Both deaths were unfair; both died much younger than they should have. And both made an impression on my life that will never fade, an impression I could think of no better way to represent than in a piece of music.

The world we live in can be a brutal place, a fact represented perhaps no more clearly than in the sudden and unexplainable death of a brilliant writer and a brilliant musician. Through stories in which strange, otherworldly connections become sources of strength and comfort in worlds even more brutal than our own, Octavia Butler's work shows us one way to survive. This is why I chose to use the verse beginning with "to survive" as the final choral music of the piece.

³¹ Butler, *Talents*, 7.

As I hope to do through music, Butler's work draws parallels between these small acts of healing and the greater healing of the human species, the work for which we are all in some small part responsible.

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